

1789  
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MANE  
ESSAY  
ON  
ORIGINAL GENIUS;  
AND ITS  
VARIOUS MODES OF EXERTION  
IN  
PHILOSOPHY  
AND THE  
FINE ARTS,  
PARTICULARLY IN  
POETRY.

*Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri.* HORAT.

L O N D O N :

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M DCC LXVII.

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THE ARTS

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS

TO explain the nature of the Arts, to point out its effects

and to show the progress of the Arts, as well as the effects of the Arts on the human mind and the progress of the Arts on the human mind



to show or improvements of Art, principal design of the following

it is of little importance

and to know what were

motives for its progress

to be offered

present time

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~~proper to assume him, that though~~  
~~the Author had at first resolved to~~  
~~confinne his views to the consideration~~  
~~of the ingredients, experiments, and~~  
~~effects of ORIGINAL LORTIC~~  
~~thus alone he was upon manner~~

## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**O explain the nature of **GENIUS**, to point out its essential ingredients, to shew the respective and the combined efficacy of those ingredients in composition, as well as in the researches of Science and the inventions or improvements of Art, is the principal design of the following Essay. It is of little importance for the Reader to know what were the Author's motives for its publication, or how it comes to be offered to the Public in its present form. Thus far however it may not be im-

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proper to acquaint him, that though the Author had at first resolved to confine his views to the consideration of the ingredients, exertions, and effects of ORIGINAL POETIC GENIUS alone, he was, upon maturer deliberation, inclined to extend his prospects; and, by taking a more extensive survey of his subject, was desirous to render the design of the Essay more complete. He acknowledges likewise, that he was partly led on to this method of prosecuting his plan by gradual and almost imperceptible steps; finding his subject growing upon him while he contemplated it nearly, and new prospects opening themselves to the imagination, in proportion to the progress he had made. As he had not therefore fixed his



# ADVERTISEMENT.

his attention wholly on any particular species of Genius, so as to exclude altogether the consideration of any other species; and as he hath taken occasion to explain both the general nature and the peculiar modifications of this quality, as exerted in the various provinces of Imagination, with various degrees of energy; he resolved to intitle his performance **AN ESSAY ON ORIGINAL GENIUS**; which title he thought would be most expressive of its design, and include under it the several kinds of Genius treated of in the course of the following Dissertation. At the same time it cannot but be observed, that the Author hath kept the main object of his attention principally in his eye; that he hath more particularly explain-

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ed the nature, as well as marked the indications and efforts of ORIGINAL POETIC GENIUS, than those of any other mode of this quality; and that the remarks which he hath made upon its other modes and degrees, are like so many lines meeting in one central point, to which the eye is directed as the termination of its prospect.

It will likewise be observed, that in this view the First Book may very properly be considered as an Introduction to the Second, in which the subject is branched out into its various parts, and more particularly discussed. In the first section of the former, the objects and ingredients of Genius are inquired into, as well as the efficacy of those ingredients in composition;

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composition; and if, in explaining the nature or enumerating the ingredients of Genius, the Author hath dissented either from the general opinion, or from the opinion of a few individuals, who may possibly think Genius properly constituted by Imagination alone, he hath produced the reasons on which his sentiments are founded. In the second section, he hath pointed out the usual indications of the above-mentioned quality, considered in a general view; and, in the third, hath entered into a disquisition on a subject nearly connected with it, that of Wit and Humour. The fourth section is appropriated to an inquiry into the mutual influence of Imagination on Taste, and of Taste on Imagination, considered as ingredients in



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the composition of Genius; and the last section of the first book is employed in inquiring into its different degrees and modes of exertion.

HAVING thus laid the foundation, the Author rises a step higher, and endeavours to explain the nature of that degree of Genius which is properly denominated ORIGINAL; after which he proceeds to consider its different exertions in Philosophy, in Poetry, and in the other fine Arts; more particularly pointing out its indications and its efforts in Poetry. Last of all, he endeavours to shew, that the early and uncultivated periods of society are peculiarly favourable to the display of original Poetic Genius, and that this quality will  
feldom

seldom appear in a very high degree in cultivated life; of which he hath likewise attempted to assign the reasons.

SUCH is the general plan of the Essay now submitted, with the utmost deference, to the judgment and candor of the Public. The Author might avail himself of the ordinary practice of soliciting an indulgence to the faults of his performance, and he is sensible that in many instances he stands in need of it; but as he does not think it reasonable to expect an indulgence to faults, which either a more accurate examination of his Work would have qualified him to correct; or which, if incorrigible, a proper sense of his own abilities would have enabled him to discern; he is under a necessity of appealing

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pealing to the impartial judgment of his Readers, however disadvantageous that appeal may be to himself; conscious as he is, that the utmost an Author can hope for, is a candid examination of his compositions, and an equitable decision concerning their genuine merit.

He is at the same time well aware, that in an ESSAY ON ORIGINAL GENIUS, Originality of Sentiment will naturally, and may, no doubt, justly be expected; and that where this is altogether wanting, no other excellence can supply the defect. This observation, it must be confessed, furnishes a very severe test for determining the merit of the following production; and indeed the Author is not a little apprehensive of  
the



# ADVERTISEMENT xi

the issue of a strict examination. In the mean time, though he has already precluded himself from the usual pleas to indulgence, he may at least be allowed to suggest the difficulty of the attempt, as some kind of apology for the defects in the execution. The far greater number even of those who pretend to be possessed of learning and intellectual accomplishments, being neither capable nor willing to think for themselves on any subject, are contented to adopt the sentiments of persons of superior abilities, that are circulated in books or in conversation, and echoed from mouth to mouth. It may likewise be remarked, that it is frequently no easy matter to distinguish the sentiments that are derived from the sources above mentioned, from those

that

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that are properly original, and are the result of invention and reflection united together. A casual coincidence of sentiment will sometimes happen, where not the least imitation was intended; and when this is the case, the Author, in whose compositions it is found, may as justly assert his claim to Originality, as if no such coincidence had ever existed.

To these considerations, which will in several instances at least account for an accidental SIMILARITY, and even SAMENESS of sentiments with those of others, supposing them to have happened in some parts of the following Essay, the Author of it begs leave to subjoin a caution to his Readers: It is, that they would not expect to meet

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meet with original sentiments in those parts of this Essay, where it is scarce possible they should be discovered. Thus, for instance, in enumerating the ingredients, pointing out the objects, or illustrating the efforts of Genius, there is very little scope afforded for any new track of thought; and those who would form just opinions of the above-mentioned articles, must think as the best Authors who have gone before them have done upon the same subjects. Other parts of the following Treatise certainly afford sufficient scope for original sentiments; and if the Author has not been so happy as to strike out some of these, he hath indeed laboured in vain, and very much failed in the attainment of his proposed end.



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As he hath discovered a vein of original sentiment in any part of the following Work, it will probably appear in those sections wherein he has considered the connections betwixt GENIUS, WIT, and HUMOUR; traced the mutual influence of IMAGINATION on TASTE, and of TASTE on IMAGINATION; explained the different modifications, degrees, and exertions of ORIGINAL GENIUS, as appearing in PHILOSOPHY, POETRY, and the other fine Arts; pointed out the PERIOD of SOCIETY most favourable to the Display of ORIGINAL POETIC GENIUS in particular, and produced various arguments in support of the position he hath advanced. In what degree Originality of Sentiment is really discovered on the above-mentioned subjects,

## ADVERTISEMENT. xv

jects, must be left to the determination of the intelligent and impartial Reader. The Author, for his own part, can at least declare, that he is not conscious of having borrowed his observations on these subjects from the Writings of any other person whatever.

Should the volume now offered to the Public, be so happy as to obtain its approbation, another will soon succeed; in which the principal design of the present volume will be farther pursued, wherein the observations on ORIGINAL POETIC GENIUS contained in it, will be exemplified by quotations from the Works of the greatest original Geniuses in Poetry, whether ancient or modern.

On

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ON the other hand, if the present volume should unhappily fall under the public censure, the Author will not be so unreasonable as to remonstrate or complain; for though the public judgment is not infallible, it will for the most part be found to be more just, as it certainly will be more impartial, than the opinion of any Writer concerning the merit of his own productions. That judgment, therefore, even though it should altogether discourage him from the publication of a second volume, he is determined to respect; for he will not obstinately persist in an ill-fated attempt to write, *adversis numinibus*; nor will he discredit himself by publishing what may be thought unworthy of a perusal.

T H E



be more difficult. To what hath been above  
advanced on this head, we shall here only  
add a single observation, that should any mo-  
dern Poet with justice claim an equality of  
merit with the renowned Ancients in point  
of Originality, he would, considering the dis-  
advantages he must labour under, be obliged  
to a still superior merit of reputation in the

mean time we may reasonably think, that  
the difference in the period of society above-  
mentioned, will be an unavoidable

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AN  
E S S A Y  
ON  
G E N I U S.

B O O K I.

OF THE  
NATURE, PROPERTIES, and INDICATIONS

OF  
G E N I U S;

AND OF ITS  
VARIOUS MODES of EXERTION.



OF THE  
AND

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

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GEORGE N. I. U. S. 2.

EFFICACY of these INGREDIENTS

BOOK I.

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3 H T 3 O

The first of these is the great diversity of the human mind, which is the result of the various modes of culture, and the various degrees of civilization. The second is the great diversity of the human body, which is the result of the various degrees of physical development. The third is the great diversity of the human soul, which is the result of the various degrees of spiritual development.

SECTION I.  
OF THE  
OBJECTS AND INGREDIENTS  
OF  
GENIUSES;  
AND OF THE  
EFFICACY of those INGREDIENTS  
UNITED IN  
COMPOSITION.

It must have occurred to every  
I one who has surveyed, with an  
ordinary degree of attention, the  
unequal distribution of natural  
talents among mankind; that as there is a  
great diversity of these observable among  
them, so the same talents are possessed in  
very different proportions by different per-  
sons. This variety both in the kind and

degree of mental accomplishments, while it indicates that man was formed for society, doth likewise clearly point out the respective stations in life which every individual is best calculated to fill and to adorn. Education, as it is well or ill directed, may invigorate or weaken the natural powers of the mind, but it cannot produce or annihilate them.

How much soever these powers may be perverted or misapplied, by the folly and ignorance of men, it cannot be denied, that the variety with which they are bestowed, is both a wise and beneficent contrivance of the Author of nature; since a diversity and a subordination of intellectual accomplishments are no less necessary to the order and good government of society, than a subordination of rank and fortune. By these means the general business of life is most successfully carried on; men become mutually dependent upon, and subservient to, the necessities of each other; some apply themselves to agriculture and commerce; while



while others, of a more contemplative disposition, or of a more lively imagination, dedicate their time to philosophy and the liberal arts.

Of those who have applied themselves to the cultivation of either, a small number only are qualified to extend their empire, and advance their improvement in any considerable degree. To explore unbeaten tracks, and make new discoveries in the regions of Science; to invent the designs, and perfect the productions of Art, is the province of Genius alone. These ends are the objects to which it constantly aspires; and the attainment of these ends can only fall within the compass of the few enlightened, penetrating, and capacious minds, that seem destined by Providence for enlarging the sphere of human knowledge and human happiness. The bulk of the literary part of mankind must be contented to follow the path marked out by such illustrious leaders.

Having suggested the objects to which Genius naturally aspires, it will be more easy to discover the means by which it attains them; or, in other words, the principal ingredients which constitute this singular accomplishment. These are IMAGINATION, JUDGMENT, and TASTE. We shall consider therefore the peculiar nature of these different qualities, and point out the particular efficacy of each, and the combined effects of all, in accomplishing the purposes of Genius.

That Imagination is the quality of all others most essentially requisite to the existence of Genius, will universally be acknowledged.

Imagination is that faculty whereby the mind not only reflects on its own operations, but which assembles the various ideas conveyed to the understanding by the canal of sensation, and treasured up in the repository of the memory, compounding or dis-  
joining

## O N G E N I U S.

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joining them at pleasure ; and which, by its plastic power of inventing new associations of ideas, and of combining them with infinite variety, is enabled to present a creation of its own, and to exhibit scenes and objects which never existed in nature. So indispensibly necessary is this faculty in the composition of Genius, that all the discoveries in science, and all the inventions and improvements in art, if we except such as have arisen from mere accident, derive their origin from its vigorous exertion \*. At the same time it must be confessed, that all the false and fallacious systems of the former, and all the irregular and illegitimate performances in the latter, which have ever

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\* It would be talking with great impropriety, to ascribe either the one or the other to the force of an acute and penetrating Judgment, since it is the chief province of this faculty, as will immediately be shewn, to employ its discerning power in demonstrating, by just reasoning and induction, the truth and importance of those discoveries, and the utility of those inventions ; while the inventions and discoveries themselves must be effectuated by the power of a plastic or warm imagination.



been obtruded upon mankind, may be justly imputed to the unbounded extravagance of the same faculty: such effects are the natural consequences of an exuberant imagination, without any proportionable share of the reasoning talent. It is evidently necessary therefore, in order to render the productions of Genius regular and just, as well as elegant and ingenious, that the discerning and coercive power of judgment should mark and restrain the excursions of a wanton imagination: in other words, that the austerity of reason should blend itself with the gaiety of the graces. Here then we have another ingredient of Genius; an ingredient essential to its constitution, and without which it cannot possibly be exhibited to full advantage, even an accurate and penetrating JUDGMENT.

The proper office of JUDGMENT in composition, is to compare the ideas which imagination collects; to observe their agreement or disagreement, their relations and resemblances;

blances; to point out such as are of a homogeneous nature; to mark and reject such as are discordant; and finally, to determine the truth and utility of the inventions or discoveries which are produced by the power of imagination †. This faculty is, in all its operations, cool, attentive, and considerate. It canvasses the design, ponders the sentiments, examines their propriety and connection, and reviews the whole composition with severe impartiality. Thus it appears to be in every respect a proper counterbalance to the RAMBLING and VOLATILE power of IMAGINATION. The one, perpetually attempting to soar, is apt to deviate into the mazes of error; while the other arrests the wanderer in its vagrant course, and compels

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† QUINTILIAN, who possessed all the ingredients of Genius in a high and almost equal degree, seems to consider Judgment as so essential a one in its composition, that he will not allow the name of *Invention* to any discovery of imagination which has not passed the test of reason: *Nec invenisse quidem credo eum qui non judicavit.*

it to follow the path of nature and of truth.

Indeed the principal use and the proper sphere of judgment, in works of Genius and Art, is to guard an author or an artist against the faults he may be apt to commit, either in the design or execution of his work, rather than to assist him in the attainment of any uncommon beauty, a task which this faculty is by no means qualified to accomplish. We may also observe, that it is chiefly employed in pointing out the most obvious blemishes in any performance, and especially such as are contrary to the rules of art. There are other blemishes, perhaps no less considerable, that utterly escape its notice; as there are certain peculiar and delicate beauties of which it can take no cognisance. Both these are the objects of that faculty which we distinguish by the name of TASTE, and considered as the last ingredient in the composition of Genius.

We



"We may define **TASTE** to be that internal sense, which, by its own exquisitely nice sensibility, without the assistance of the reasoning faculty, distinguishes and determines the various qualities of the objects submitted to its cognisance; pronouncing, by its own arbitrary verdict, that they are grand or mean, beautiful or ugly, decent or ridiculous\*." From this definition it appears, that Taste is designed as a supplement to the defects of the power of judgment, at least in canvassing the merit of the performances of art. These indeed are the subjects on which it exercises its discerning talent with the greatest propriety, as well as with the greatest probability of success: its dominion, however, is in some degree universal, both in the Arts and Sciences; though that dominion is much more absolute, and more legitimate in the former than it is in the

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\* Omnes enim, tacito quodam sensu, sine ulla arte aut ratione, quæ sint in artibus ac rationibus recta ac prava dijudicant. CICERO *de Orat.* lib. iii, cap. 50.

W  
standing

latter.

latter. The truth is, to bring philosophical subjects to the tribunal of Taste, or to employ this faculty principally in their examination, is extremely dangerous, and naturally productive of absurdity and error. The order of things is thereby reversed; reason is dethroned, and sense usurps the place of judgment. Taste therefore must be contented to act an inferior and subordinate part in the researches of science: it must not pretend to take the lead of reason, but humbly follow the path marked out by it. In the designs and works of art, the case is quite otherwise. Instead of being directed by judgment, it claims the direction in its turn; its authority is uncontrollable, and there lies no appeal from its decisions. Indeed it is well qualified to decide with precision and certainty on subjects of this kind; for it possesses a perspicacity of discernment with regard to them, which reason can by no means pretend to, even on those subjects that are the most adapted to its nature. So much more perfect are the senses than the understanding.

standing. We shall illustrate these remarks by an example.

Let us suppose two persons, the one possessed of a comprehensive and penetrating judgment, without any refinement or delicacy of taste; the other endued with the most exquisite sensibility of taste, without any extraordinary proportion of the reasoning talent, both set to work in examining the merit of some masterly production of art, that admired piece of history-painting, for instance, of the Crucifixion, by MICHAEL ANGELO, and observe their different procedure, and the very different remarks they will make. The former measures with his eye the exact proportion of every figure in the piece; he considers how far the rules of art are observed in the design and ordonnance; whether the group of subordinate figures naturally lead the eye to the capital one, and fix the attention principally upon it; and whether the artist has given a proper variety of expression to the countenances

of



of the several spectators. Upon discovering that the painter had exactly conformed to the rules of his art in all these particulars, he would not only applaud his judgment, but would also give testimony to his mastery and skill; without, however, having any true feeling of those uncommon beauties which constitute real merit in the art of painting. Such would be the procedure and remarks of the man of mere judgment. Consider now, on the other hand, in what a different manner the man of taste will proceed, and in what manner he will be affected. Instead of attending, in the first place, to the just proportions of the various figures exhibited in the draught, however necessary to be observed; instead of remarking, with approbation, the judgment and ingenuity displayed by the artist in the uniformity of design, and in the regularity and justness that appear in the disposition of the several figures of the piece; he fixes his eye upon the principal one, in which he observes the various contortions of the countenance, the  
natural

natural expressions of agonising pain, mixed however with an air of divine benignity and compassion. Then he passes on to the contemplation of the inferior and subordinate figures, in which he perceives a variety of opposite passions, of rage and terror, of admiration and pity, strongly marked in their different countenances, and feels the corresponding emotions in their utmost strength which those several passions are calculated to inspire. In a word, the man of judgment approves of and admires what is merely mechanical in the piece; the man of taste is struck with what could only be effected by the power of Genius. Wherever nature is justly represented, wherever the features of any one passion are forcibly expressed, to those features his attention is attracted, and he dwells on the contemplation of them with intense and exquisite pleasure. The sensations of the former are cool, weak, and unaffecting throughout; those of the latter are warm, vivid, and deeply interesting; or, to speak more properly,

perly, the one reasons, the other feels †. But as no reasoning can enable a man to form an idea of what is really an object of sensation, the most penetrating judgment can never supply the want of an exquisite sensibility of taste. In order therefore to relish and to judge of the productions of Genius and of Art, there must be an internal perceptive power, exquisitely sensible to all the impressions which such productions are capable of making on a susceptible mind.

This internal power of perception, which we distinguish by the name of TASTE, and which we have shewn to be so necessary for enabling us to judge properly concerning works of imagination, does not appear to be requisite, in the same degree, in the researches of Science. In this department, reason re-assumes the reins, points out and prescribes

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† Non ratione aliqua, sed motu nescio an inenarrabili judicatur. Neque hoc ab ullo satis explicari puto, licet multi tentaverint. QUINT. *Instit.* lib. vi.



the flight of fancy, assigns the office, and determines the authority of taste, which, as we have already observed, must here be contented to act a secondary part. In philosophical speculations a constant appeal is made to the faculty of Reason, not to that of Imagination; principles are laid down, arguments are adduced, phenomena are explained, and their consequences investigated. Hence it follows, that in the whole process judgment is much more exercised than taste. Yet some scope is also afforded for the exercise of the latter faculty; for as all discoveries in science are the work of imagination, which will be afterwards particularly shewn; so taste may be very properly exerted in the illustration of those discoveries which have obtained the sanction of reason; provided that, in this case, taste and imagination act under the direction, and submit to the controlling power of judgment.

On the other hand, judgment has a particular province assigned to it, in examining

the works of Genius and Art; though, with regard to these, it acts an inferior part, as taste does in the former case. Judgment must not presume to take cognizance of those exquisite and delicate beauties, which are properly the objects of the last mentioned faculty; but it may determine concerning regularity, justness, and uniformity of design, and concerning propriety of sentiment and expression. All these fall within its sphere; and its decisions in these respects command our assent.

Upon the whole; as JUDGMENT and TASTE may be alternately exercised in the sphere of each other, and ought to act with combined influence, though with different power, and with different degrees of exertion; so both these faculties must be united with a high degree of imagination, in order to constitute improved and consummate Genius.

From the observations that have been made on those distinguishing faculties of the human mind,

mind, IMAGINATION, JUDGMENT, and TASTE, it is evident, that not any one of these talents, in whatever degree we may suppose it to exist, can of itself attain the objects of Genius. Even imagination, the most essential and predominant ingredient in the composition of this character, if we suppose it to exist in a man without any considerable proportion of the other faculties, will be miserably inadequate to the objects just mentioned; for though it may, by its own native vigour, sometimes strike out an important discovery, either in science or in art, yet this will no way avail, if there is not a sufficient strength of reason bestowed to prove its truth and utility. Such a discovery will often, however undeservedly, expose the author to ridicule; and the utmost reward he can hope for of his labour, is to gain the character of a romantic visionary, or an adventurous, but vain, projector; though the same discovery more clearly revealed, and more fully demonstrated, by another person, possessed perhaps of no higher



degree of imagination, but endued with a more penetrating judgment, will procure him that reputation and honour, of which the greatest part was due to the first author.

Having considered the nature of the different faculties of IMAGINATION, JUDGMENT and TASTE, and pointed out their respective exertions; having also shewn that imagination, the most distinguishing of these faculties, is of itself insufficient to attain the objects of Genius; we shall now take a view of Imagination, Judgment, and Taste, as forming by their union the full perfection of Genius, and shall observe their combined effects in composition.

If we suppose a PLASTIC and COMPREHENSIVE IMAGINATION, an ACUTE INTELLECT, and an exquisite SENSIBILITY and REFINEMENT of TASTE, to be all combined in one person, and employed in the arts or sciences, we may easily conceive, that the effect of such an union

union will be very extraordinary. In such a case, these faculties going hand in hand together, mutually enlighten and assist each other. Imagination takes a long and adventurous, but secure flight, under the guiding rein of judgment; which, though naturally cool and deliberate, catches somewhat of the ardor of the former in its rapid course. To drop the allusion, imagination imparts vivacity to judgment, and receives from it solidity and justness: TASTE bestows ELEGANCE on both, and derives from them PRECISION and SENSIBILITY. The effect of the union of these qualities in composition, will be observed and felt by every reader. It will appear in new and surprising sentiments, in splendid imagery, in just and nervous reasoning, and in eloquent, graceful, and animated expression. Hence, in the writings of an author who possesses the qualities above mentioned in a high degree, we are convinced, pleased, or affected, according to the various strain of his composition, as it is adapted to the

understanding, the imagination, or the heart.

We shall not pretend to ascertain the exact proportion of the several ingredients which enter into the formation of Genius; it is sufficient to have shewn, that they must all subsist in a considerable degree, a truth which we have deduced from the objects of Genius themselves. We shall only remark, that as among the faculties of which Genius is composed, imagination bears the principal and most distinguishing part, so of course it will and ought to be the predominant one. An exact equilibrium of the reasoning and inventive powers of the mind, is perhaps utterly incompatible with their very different natures; but though a perfect equipoise cannot subsist, yet they may be distributed in such a proportion, as to preserve nearly an equality of weight; and, notwithstanding the opinion which is generally and absurdly entertained to the contrary, the powers of imagination and rea-

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son may be united in a very high degree, though this is not always the case, in the same person.

Should any one be inclined to controvert the account we have given of the nature and ingredients of Genius, and instead of allowing it to be a compound quality, be of opinion that it is constituted and characterised by Imagination alone; or, in other words, that Genius and Imagination are one and the same thing; we shall not dispute with him about words; for the ingredients of Genius depend intirely upon the acceptance in which we take it, and upon the extent and offices we assign to it. It is evident, from the idea we have given of its objects, that the ingredients above enumerated and explained, are necessary to the attainment of them; and therefore we admit those ingredients into its composition. If, after all, any person should still continue to think that Genius and Imagination are synonymous terms, and that the powers of the

former are most properly expressed by those of the latter; let him reflect, that if the former is characterised by fancy alone, without any proportion of judgment, there is scarce any means left us of distinguishing betwixt the flights of Genius and the reveries of a Lunatic.

It is likewise to be observed, that we regard the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as works of Genius, not only because there appears an astonishing display of Imagination in the invention of characters and incidents in those admired productions; but also, because that Imagination is regulated by the nicest judgment; because the characters are justly drawn, as well as uniformly supported; and the incidents as judiciously disposed, as they are happily invented; and, lastly, because regularity and beauty of design, as well as mastery of execution, are conspicuous throughout the whole. Take away the excellencies now mentioned, and you deprive those divine poems of half their merit;

merit: destitute of these excellencies, they could only be considered as the rapsodies of an extravagant and lawless fancy, not as the productions of well regulated and consummate Genius.

From all that has been said, one obvious remark naturally arises, that industry and application, though they may improve the powers of Genius, can never supersede the necessity, or supply the want of them. The truth of this observation is abundantly confirmed by the different strain and success of the writings of different authors; which writings serve to shew, that as Genius is the vital principle which animates every species of composition, the most elaborate performances without it, are no other than a lifeless mass of matter, frigid and uninteresting, equally destitute of passion, sentiment and spirit. To conclude: A performance void of Genius, is like an opaque body viewed in a dark and cloudy day; but a performance



ance irradiated with the beams of this divine quality, is like an object rendered pellucid and transparent by the splendor of the sun.

## NOTES

## SECTION II.

## OF THE

## USUAL INDICATIONS

## GENIUS.

**H**AVING endeavoured, in the preceding section, to explain the nature, and determine the ingredients of Genius; and having likewise pointed out the effects of those ingredients in composition, we shall now proceed to consider the most usual indications of the above mentioned quality.

It may be observed in general, that Genius is neither uniform in the manner, nor periodical with regard to the time of its appearance. The manner depends upon the original constitution and peculiar modification

tion of the mental powers, together with the corresponding organisation of the corporeal ones, and upon that mutual influence of both, in consequence of which the mind receives a particular bias to one certain object, and acquires a talent for one art or science rather than another. The period depends sometimes upon a fortunate accident encouraging its exertion, sometimes upon a variety of concurring causes stimulating its ardor, and sometimes upon that natural effervescence of mind (if we may thus express it) by which it bursts forth with irresistible energy, at different ages, in different persons, not only without any foreign aid, but in opposition to every obstacle that arises in its way.

With regard to the first of these points: though Genius discovers itself in a vast variety of forms, we have already observed, that those forms are distinguished and characterised by one quality common to them all, possessed indeed in very different degrees, and



and exerted in very different capacities; this quality, it will be understood, is Imagination. The mental powers unfold themselves in exact proportion to our necessities and occasions for exercising them. Imagination therefore being that faculty which lays the foundation of all our knowledge, by collecting and treasuring up in the repository of the memory those materials on which Judgment is afterwards to work, and being peculiarly adapted to the gay, delightful, vacant season of childhood and youth, appears in those early periods in all its puerile brilliance and simplicity, long before the reasoning faculty discovers itself in any considerable degree. Imagination however, in general, exercises itself for some time indiscriminately on the various objects presented to it by the senses, without taking any particular or determinate direction; and sometimes the peculiar bent and conformation of Genius is discernible only in the advanced period of youth. The mind, as soon as it becomes capable of attending to the representation

sentation it receives of outward objects by the ministry of the senses, views such a representation with the curiosity of a stranger, who is presented with the prospect of an agreeable and uncommon scene. The novelty of the objects at first only affects it with pleasure and surprise. It afterwards surveys, revolves, and reviews them successively one after another; and, at last, after having been long conversant with them, selects one distinguished and favourite object from the rest, which it pursues with its whole bent and vigour. There are some persons, it is true, in whom a certain bias or talent for one particular art or science, rather than another, appears in very early life; and in so great a degree as would incline us to imagine, that such a disposition and talent must have been congenial and innate. While persons are yet children, we discover in their infantile pursuits the opening buds of Genius; we discern the rudiments of the Philosopher, the Poet, the Painter, and the Architect.

The

The productions indeed of youthful geniuses will be naturally marked with those improprieties and defects, both in design, sentiment and expression, which result from the florid, exuberant, and undisciplined imagination, that is peculiar to an age wherein Judgment hath not yet exerted its chastening power. When the case is otherwise, and this faculty hath attained considerable maturity in early youth, it affords no favourable presage of future grandeur and extent of Genius; for we rarely find fruit on the tree which puts forth its leaves and blossoms on the first return of spring \*.

Nature

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\* QUINTILIAN considers these forward geniuses as hasty and untimely growths, like those ears of corn, which suddenly spring up in a shallow soil, without striking their roots deep into the earth, and acquire the colour, but not the substance of full and ripe grain, before the natural time.

*Illud ingeniorum velut præcox genus, non temere unquam pervenit ad frugem. Hi sunt qui parva facile faciunt; & audacia proveci, quicquid illic possunt, statim ostendunt. Possunt autem id demum quod in proximo est:*



Nature requires time to mature her productions; the powers of the mind and body grow up together, and both acquire their proper consistence and vigour by just degrees; this at least is the ordinary course of nature, from which there are few exceptions.

But though Genius cannot be said to attain its full perfection till the reasoning faculty, one of its essential ingredients, acquires its utmost extent and improvement; yet there are certain indications of its existence and powers, even in early life, which an attentive observer may easily discover, and which are as various as the forms wherein it appears.

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est: verba continuant; hæc vultu interrito, nulla tardati verecundia proferunt: non multum præstant, sed cito; non subest vera vis, nec penitus immixtis radicibus nititur: ut quæ summo solo sparsa sunt semina, celerius se effundunt & imitatæ spicas herbulae inanibus aristis ante messem flavescent. QUINT. *Instit.* lib. 1. cap. 3.

We

We shall consider the most distinguishing of these forms, and the peculiar indications which characterise them. Let us first observe the essential indications of philosophic Genius.

Imagination receives a very different modification or form in the mind of a Philosopher, from what it takes in that of a Poet. In the one it extends to all the possible relations of things; in the other it admits only those that are probable, in order to determine such as are real. Hence it should seem, that in the first instance it ought to possess greater compass, and in the last, greater accuracy. Here then we have one characteristic indication of a Genius for philosophical Science; and that is, accuracy of imagination. Its associations of ideas will be perfectly just and exact, no extraneous ones will be admitted; it will assemble all that are necessary to a distinct conception and illustration of the subject it contemplates, and discard such as are no way con-

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ductive to those purposes. This precision and accuracy in selecting and combining its ideas, appears to proceed from a native regularity, clearness, and even strength of Imagination, united with a certain *acumen ingenii*, a sharpness of discernment, the true criterions of philosophic Genius.

We may farther observe, that though Reason, by slow and gradual steps attains its utmost extent of comprehension, yet being a very distinguishing faculty in the mind of the Philosopher, it appears to advance faster to maturity in him than in any other person; and some presages of the future extent of his understanding may be derived from his first argumentative essays. He will likewise discover an acuteness of perception, a shrewdness and sagacity in his observations, remarkable for his years; and will begin early to institute comparisons, to connect his ideas, and to judge of the relations in which he stands to the persons and objects with which he is surrounded.

This



This seems to be the natural progress, and first exertion of Reason, in useful Science.

Let it be remarked in the last place, that philosophical Genius is peculiarly distinguished by a certain moral and contemplative turn of mind. It feels a powerful tendency to speculation, and derives its chief pleasure from it. Not satisfied with exploring the phenomena of nature, it delights to investigate their unknown causes. Such are the usual indications of philosophic Genius. We shall next consider the most remarkable indications of this character in Poetry.

As Imagination is the predominant ingredient in the composition of poetic Genius, it will there discover itself in its utmost exuberance and fecundity. This faculty will naturally display its creative power on those subjects which afford fullest scope for its exercise; for which reason it will run into the more pleasing species of fiction, and

will be particularly distinguished by a happy fertility of invention. But though fable be the strain of composition of all others most suitable and appropriated to the highest class of poetic Genius, neither its choice nor its abilities are restricted to this alone. It freely indulges itself on a variety of subjects; in the selection of which a Poet is in a great measure influenced by his age, temper, and ruling passion. Thus poems describing the beauties of nature, the tender transports of love, the flattering prospects of ambition, the affectionate and ardent reciprocations of friendship, and the peaceful pleasures of rural tranquillity, are often among the first essays of a young Bard. We purposely avoid being so particular on this branch of our subject, as we would otherwise choose to be, lest we should anticipate some of the observations that will be made on the distinguishing characters of original poetic Genius, in another part of our Essay.

It

It may not however be improper farther to observe in this place, that one who is born with a Genius for Poetry, will discover a peculiar relish and love for it in his earliest years; and that he will be naturally led to imitate the productions he admires. Imagination, which in every man displays itself before any of the other faculties, will be discernible in him in a state of childhood, and will strongly prompt him to Poetry: Tasso, we are told, composed poems when he was only five years of age; POPE, we know, wrote some accurate little pieces, when he was scarce twelve; and he himself acquaints us, by a beautiful, but doubtless figurative expression, that he began to write almost as soon as he began to speak:

As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,

I lis'd in numbers, for the numbers came.

MILTON dedicated his Genius to the Muses in his earliest youth: he has presented us with a few poems written in his thirteenth or fourteenth year, inaccurate indeed, as



was natural at such an age, especially in one who was afterwards to become so great a Poet, but full of the ardor and inspiration of genuine Poetry. Indeed most of his juvenile pieces, which are very unequal in their merit, afford the happiest presages of that amazing grandeur and extent of Imagination, of which he long after exhibited so glorious a monument in his *Paradise Lost*.

We shall only add, that the performances of a youthful Poet, possessed of true Genius, will always abound with that luxuriance of imagination, and with that vivacity and spirit which are suitable to his years; but at the same time they will generally be destitute of that chastity and masculine vigour of expression, as well as justness and propriety of sentiment, which are only compatible with maturer age †.

The  
 † That great Master of Reason and Eloquence, whom we last quoted, and whom we shall have frequent

The same VIVACITY and ARDOR of Imagination which indicates the Poet, characterises

quent occasion to quote in the course of this Essay, since his sentiments on the subjects of which he treats, are as just as they are elegantly and happily expressed, observes, that luxuriance of Imagination is to be regarded as a favourable indication of future fertility and copiousness of Genius; advises that it should by all means be encouraged; and suggests the proper method of encouraging it, without apprehending any danger from its excess.

Nec unquam me in his discentis annis offendat si quid superfuerit. Quin ipsis doctoribus hoc esse curæ velim, ut teneras adhuc mentes more nutricum mollius alant, & satiari velut quodam jucundioris disciplinæ lacte patiantur. Erit illud plenius interim corpus, quod mox adulta ætas astringat. Hinc spes roboris. Maciem namque & infirmitatem in posterum minari solet protinus omnibus membris expressus infans. Au-deat hæc ætas plura, & inveniat, & inventis gaudeat, sint licet illa non satis interim sicca & severa. Facile est remedium; ubertatis, sterilia nullo labore vincuntur. Illa mihi in pueris natura minimum spei dabit, in qua ingenium judicio præsumitur. Materiam esse primam volo vel abundantiorē, atque ultra quam oporteat fusam. Multum inde decoquent anni, multum ratio limabit, aliquid velut usu ipso deteretur, sit modo unde

terises likewise and distinguishes the Painter; the signs only being different by which it is expressed. The former endeavours to impart his sentiments and ideas to us by verbal description; the latter sets before our eyes a striking resemblance of the objects of which he intends to convey an idea, by the ingenious contrivance of various colours delicately blended, and by the proper union of light and shade. In order to effect his purpose, he must have his imagination possessed with very vivid conceptions of the objects he

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excidi, possit & quod exculpi. Erit autem, si non ab initio tenuem nimium laminam duxerimus, & quam celatura altior rumpat. *QUINTIL. Instit. lib. ii. cap. 4.*

CICERO's sentiments on this subject coincide exactly with those of *QUINTILIAN* quoted above:

Volo enim, se efferat in adolescente fecunditas: nam facilius, sicut in vitibus, revocantur ea, quæ sese nimium profuderunt, quam, si nihil valet materies, nova samenta cultura excitantur: ita volo esse in adolescente, upde aliquid amputem. Non enim potest in eo esse succus diuturnus, quod nimis celeriter est maturitatem assecutum. *De Orat. lib. ii. cap. 21.*

would



would thus exhibit; otherwise it is impossible he should delineate the transcript of them upon canvas. The Imagination must guide the hand in the design and execution of the whole. A Painter therefore of true Genius, having his fancy strongly impressed and wholly occupied by the most lively conceptions of the objects of which he intends to express the resemblance, has immediate recourse to his pencil, and attempts, by the dexterous use of colours, to sketch out those perfect and living figures which exist in his own mind. He will be frequently observed to employ his talents in this manner; and the eminence and extent of his Genius is indicated by the degree of his success.

Imagination, in a considerable degree, is also requisite to the Musician, who would become excellent in his profession. He must be thoroughly acquainted with the power of sounds in all their variety of combination. His imagination must assist him  
in

in combining sounds, in order to constitute different species of harmony; and his experience of the effects of various modulations, first on the ear, and, by the instrumentality of this organ on the passions, must aid his fancy in setting his compositions to the notes of music. By such exercises a musical Genius is indicated.

A Talent or Genius for Architecture is discovered by a proper union of Imagination and Taste, directed to the accomplishment of the ends of this art. The degree of Imagination necessary to a mastery in Architecture, depends upon the bounds we assign to it, and the improvements we suppose practicable in it. Human ingenuity hath as yet discovered only five orders in this art, which contain all the various forms of grandeur and beauty, consistent with regularity, that have ever been invented; and our modern artists have confined their ambition to the study and imitation of those illustrious monuments of

Genius

Genius left them by their predecessors, as if it were impossible to invent any other superior or equal models. To invent new models of Architecture, would, we confess, require great compass of Imagination. In such inventions however true Genius delights, and by such it is indicated in a very high degree. To unite in one consummate plan the various orders of ancient Architecture, requires indeed a considerable share of Imagination; but it may be observed, that a refined and well formed Taste is the principal requisite in a modern Architect; for though Fancy may be employed in combining the different orders of Architecture in one general design, it is the province of Taste alone to review the parts thus combined, and to determine the beauty and gracefulness of the whole. Setting aside, therefore, new inventions in this art, which can only be effected by an uncommon extent of Imagination, we may venture to affirm, that the employment of Fancy and



and Taste, in the manner above mentioned, is a proper indication of a Genius for Architecture, as well as necessary to the accomplishment of such a Genius.

With respect to a Genius for Eloquence, its characteristical indications are essentially the same with those which denote a talent for Poetry \*. The same creative power, the same extent and force, the same impetuosity, and fire of Imagination, distinguish both almost in an equal degree; with this difference only, that the latter is permitted to range with a looser rein than is indulged to the former, which,

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\* Est enim finitimus Oratori Poeta, numeris adstrictior paulo, verborum autem licentia liberior, multis vero ornandi generibus socius ac pene par; in hoc quidem certe prope idem, nullis ut terminis circumscribat, aut definiat jus suum, quo minus ei liceat eadem illa facultate, & copia, vagari qua velit. CICERO *de Orat.* lib. i. cap. 16.

though

though it may dare to emulate the boldness and sublimity of poetic inspiration, is not allowed to sport and wanton with such wildness and luxuriance.

With respect to a Genius for Eloquence its characteristic indications are essentially the same with those which denote a talent for Poetry. The same creative power, the same extent and force the same impetuosity, and the of imagination distinguish both almost in an equal degree; with this difference only, that the latter is permitted to range with a looser rein than is indulged to the former, which has

been considered by many as words of

SECTION

It is a common observation, that the

poet is a man of genius, and the

orator is a man of science.

There is, however, a great

difference between these accomplishments;

and

and as the subject of this section is neither  
 sciences nor unscientific and is not a  
 itself, how we shall treat it in the  
 of it to explain the nature, and to

# SECTION III. OF THE CONNECTION BETWIXT

GENIUS,  
 WIT,  
 AND  
 HUMOUR.

GENIUS, WIT, and HUMOUR, have  
 been considered by many as words of  
 equivalent signification; and have therefore  
 been often injudiciously confounded to-  
 gether. Some do not perceive the difference  
 betwixt them; and others, not attending to  
 it, use these expressions alternately and in-  
 discriminately. There is however a real  
 difference between these accomplishments;  
 and



and as the subject of this Section is neither incurious nor unimportant, and is, to us at least, new, we shall endeavour in the progress of it to explain the nature, and to mark the essential and peculiar characters of the above-mentioned qualities: we shall point out their distinguishing difference, and shew their mutual connection.

The talents we are treating of are all the offspring of Imagination, of which quality however they participate in very different degrees; as a much greater share of it is requisite to constitute true Genius, than is necessary to constitute either of the other endowments. Our present inquiry obliges us to anticipate a little what will afterwards be more fully discussed, by remarking, that Genius is characterised by a copious and plastic, as well as a vivid and extensive Imagination; by which means it is equally qualified to invent and create, or to conceive and describe in the most lively manner the objects it contemplates.

Such

Such is the nature, and such are the essential characters of Genius. On the other hand, Wit and Humour neither invent nor create; they neither possess the vigour, the compass, nor the plastic power of the other quality. Their proper province is to assemble with alertness those sentiments and images, which may excite pleasantry or ridicule. Hence vivacity and quickness of Imagination form their peculiar characters. In fact, the accomplishments of Wit and Humour, which are so much the objects of applause and envy, are derived from this vivacity of Fancy, united with an exquisite sense of Ridicule. As a proof of this, we need only to observe, that they are generally employed in painting the ridiculous in characters and in manners; and those flashes of wit, and strokes of humour, we so much admire, are by no means the effects of a creative Imagination, the distinguishing characteristic of true Genius; but of a quickness and readiness of fancy in assembling such ideas as lie latent in the mind, till the combining

combining power of association, with the assistance of the retentive faculty, calls them forth, by the suggestion of some distant, perhaps but corresponding circumstance. This seems to be no improbable theory of Wit and Humour; which, though akin to each other, and produced by the same causes, are however distinct qualities, and may exist separately.

The former is the most shining, the latter the most pleasing and the most useful quality. Wit discovers itself in smart repartees, in ingenious conceits, in fanciful allusions, and in brilliant sentiments. Humour, on the other hand, manifests itself in ludicrous representations, in masterly strokes of manners and character, in shrewd observations, and in facetious argumentation and narrative. This quality may be divided into two kinds; into that which is displayed in the representation of characters, and may be denominated humour of character; and into that which is displayed in composition,

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and



and may be called humour in writing. The first consists in the art of marking the follies, the foibles, or the oddities of the character exhibited so strongly, and exposing them in such a ludicrous light, as to excite pleasantry and laughter. Sometimes the character may be so amiable, that its little peculiarities, instead of lessening our esteem or affection, increase the former, and conciliate the latter, provided however, those peculiarities are innocent in themselves, and indicate or imply genuine excellence. Of this kind is the character of Sir ROGER DE COVERLEY; drawn with the most exquisite humour, and by the happiest effort of ADAMSON'S delicate pencil.

Humour in writing consists either of random strokes of RIDICULE and FACETIOUSNESS, occasionally thrown out, as subjects of DROLLERY and PLEASANTRY happen to occur; or of a vein of IRONY and DELICATE SATIRE, purposely displayed on a particular subject. Perhaps POPE'S *Rape of*

the

The *Look* is the most refined piece of HUMOUR in this kind, which any age can boast. There remains indeed another species of Wit and Humour (for it participates of, or at least pretends to both) of the lowest sort however, but deserving some attention; that which consists of puns, quibbles, and the petulant sallies of a rambling and undisciplined fancy; and which is sometimes displayed in conversation. This species of it is not only generally ostentatious, but superficial. It flashes for a little while, and then expires. It rushes on with precipitation, and, like a shallow stream, makes a great noise; but the rivulet soon dries up, and betrays the penuriousness of the source from which it flowed. The conversation-wits resemble those persons, whose ideas pass through their minds in too quick succession to be distinct; but who, nevertheless, being endued with a natural volubility of expression, acquit themselves to admiration in company; while one is at a loss to find either sense or grammar in their compositions. To become a

man of true Wit and Humour, it is necessary to *think*; a piece of drudgery which the Gentlemen we are speaking of are too lively to undergo.

But to return: it appears that Wit and Humour, though nearly ALLIED to true Genius, being the offspring of the same parent, are however of a distinct nature; since the former are produced by the efforts of a RAMBLING and SPORTIVE Fancy, the latter proceeds from the copious effusions of a plastic Imagination. Hence it will follow, that every man of GREAT WIT will not be a GREAT GENIUS, nor will every man of GREAT GENIUS be a GREAT WIT. These qualities do not always exist together. Thus SWIFT was not a GENIUS, at least of a very EXALTED kind \*, in the sense in which

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\* Perhaps some of the Dean's most zealous admirers may be offended with a declaration which excludes his pretensions to any extraordinary degree of Genius.

But



which we have considered it; nor OSSIAN a Wit. To this perhaps it will be replied, that the Muse of the latter had caught the complexion of his own temper, which was a melancholy one, partly derived from his natural constitution, and partly occasioned by the misfortunes of his family; and that his subjects, being of the mournful kind, could not admit of the sprightly graces of WIT and HUMOUR. But let it be observed, that

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But let them reflect on what such pretensions are founded. I can recollect no performance of the Doctor's, which can justly denominate him a man of great Genius, excepting his *Gulliver* and his *Tale of a Tub*; in which, it must be confessed, he hath united both Invention and Humour: and therefore we allow him to have possessed a degree of Genius, proportionable to the degree of Invention discovered in the above mentioned performances. In that kind of wit and humour which he attempted, though not the most delicate, he unquestionably excelled all mankind. In the scale of Genius, however, we must assign him an inferior station; since his Muse scarce ever rises to the region of the Sublime, which is the proper sphere of a great Genius; but, on the contrary, delights to wallow in the offal and nastiness of a sty or a kennel.

the melancholy turn of his mind, which irresistibly determined him to the choice of mournful subjects, is a sufficient proof that these were not only most suited to his Genius, but that those of a solemn, awful, and pathetic nature, if we include the wild and picturesque, as subservient to the others, were the only subjects in which he was qualified to excel. The lighter ornaments of WIT would have been unsuitable to the sublimity of his Genius, and the pensive turn of his mind. We do not intend to insinuate, that Genius and Wit in the highest degree are in general incompatible. They were united in SHAKESPEAR almost in an equal measure; and YOUNG hath given a specimen of the former in his *Night Thoughts*, and of the latter in his *Universal Passion*; and in him they were both united together in a degree of perfection that has not been equalled, since the era of the great Poet last mentioned. We only mean to assert, that the one may exist without the other, which we think hath been proved in the case of Os-

state in particular, though we shall readily  
 allow, that the simplicity of manners which  
 prevailed in the times of the CALLEDONIAN  
 Bard, a simplicity that was very unfavoura-  
 ble to the display of Wit and Humour,  
 joined to the melancholy turn of his own  
 temper, heightened by his afflictions, might  
 have greatly contributed to suppress the ta-  
 lents of which we are speaking, supposing  
 him to have been possessed of them. We  
 shall only add, that there is one case in  
 which Wit and Humour may claim the de-  
 nomination of Genius, and that is, when  
 they are accompanied with a rich fund of  
 invention, as in the *Rape of the Lock*, in  
 which, though the machinery of the Sylphs  
 is not the mere creation of the Poet's fancy,  
 yet the particular nature and employment  
 of those wonderful aerial beings is altoge-  
 ther his own fiction. In this incomparable  
 herotomical poem, Pope has incontestibly  
 established his character both as a man of  
 Genius and Wit. It ought however to be  
 remembered, that we allow his title to the



first of these denominations, not at all upon account of the vein of delicate and refined satire which runs through the whole poem, for WIT and HUMOUR could have produced this; but upon account of that ingenious INVENTION, and that PICTURESQUE DESCRIPTION, so remarkable in it, which those qualities of themselves could never have produced.

Upon the whole: from the view we have taken of the nature and characters of GENIUS, WIT, and HUMOUR, it appears evident, that as these qualities are in their nature different from each other, and are marked by certain peculiar and distinguishing characters, so they have different spheres of exercise assigned them, in which alone they can display their proper powers to advantage. We may therefore with some appearance of reason infer, that the connection of the above-mentioned talents is only partial and casual, not universal and necessary. This hath in part been already evinced

and

and exemplified by particular instances; from which it appears, that those talents have been sometimes united, and sometimes disjoined in different persons. As we do not remember to have seen this accidental connection, where a necessary one at first view might be expected, accounted for, we shall conclude the present Section with endeavouring to assign the reasons of it.

That Genius, Wit, and Humour, do in common participate of Imagination, we have already acknowledged. This participation indeed forms a NATURAL, but not a NECESSARY connection betwixt those qualities. The MODES (if we may so express it) and DEGREES of this Imagination are so different, and the tempers of men, on which the exertion of the above mentioned qualities greatly depends, are likewise so various, that a real union becomes merely FORTUITOUS. In order to make this still more evident, as well as farther to account for it, let us recollect the peculiar office of GENIUS,

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compared with that of WIT and HUMOUR. The proper office of the former is to INVENT incidents or characters, to CREATE new and uncommon scenery, and to describe every object it contemplates, in the most striking manner, and with the most picturesque circumstances: that of the latter is to represent MEN, MANNERS and THINGS, in such a ludicrous light, as to excite PLEASANTRY, and provoke RISIBILITY. Hence we conclude, that a vigorous, extensive, and PLASTIC Imagination, is the principal qualification of the one, and a quick and lively Fancy the distinguishing characteristic of the other. These qualities do not appear to be connected in any great degree; for what considerable connection is there betwixt a celerity in assembling SIMILAR ideas, together with a lively perception of that SIMILARITY, and the power of inventing a variety of surprising SCENES and INCIDENTS, conceived with the utmost strength and compass of Imagination? It should even seem that on some occasions an extraordinary



nary vivacity of Fancy, which includes a certain degree of volatility, occasioning the mind to start as it were from one object to another, without allowing it time to conceive any of them distinctly, might be prejudicial to that vivid conception, and that extensive combination of ideas which indicate and characterise true Genius. In this case, the mind, hurried with precipitancy from one theme to another, though it may catch a glimpse, yet rarely obtains a full view of the object it desires to contemplate. This seems to be the principal reason why GENIUS, whose ideas are vivid and COMPREHENSIVE, is not always united with WIT, whose conceptions are quick and LIVELY, but frequently superficial.

After all, I am sensible that the position laid down above, will to many persons appear extremely problematical; and that several of those who can perceive the difference betwixt GENIUS and WIT, will still be of opinion, that these qualities, however distinct

distinct from each other, are nevertheless indissolubly connected. After having reflected a good deal upon the subject, the sentiments I have now delivered are the result of that reflection; which sentiments I have endeavoured to confirm by examples, more of which I could have added, had it appeared to be necessary. The truth is, the observing that GENIUS and WIT have to all appearance been separately possessed by different persons, led me first to suspect that their union was casual. Proceeding upon this principle, I have attempted to assign the reasons of it, which I have deduced from the different natures of those qualities themselves. Perhaps indeed the examples may appear more convincing than the arguments. I can conceive indeed but one other objection to the former, besides what has been already suggested, which is, that men of Genius, conscious of possessing superior talents, are not very ambitious of acquiring the reputation which arises from WIT. But I cannot think that this answer intirely solves the difficulty,

sup-

supposing the union of the above-mentioned qualities really necessary, for the reputation acquired by the display of Wit, however inferior this talent may in fact be, is often superior to that which is acquired by the display of Genius; and we may conclude in general, that most of those who are possessed of it, will be desirous of being distinguished upon that account; and consequently, where it does not display itself, that it does not probably in any great degree exist. It is necessary to remark, in order to prevent any mistake of my meaning, that while I endeavoured to prove that Genius and Wit are not necessarily connected, I had chiefly in my eye that species of Wit which is the sudden effusion of a lively fancy, and which is poured forth in conversation with a surprising readiness and exuberance. That real Genius frequently exists without this kind of it, I am fully convinced by many examples, which, as the Reader may easily recollect them, I shall not here enumerate. That kind of Wit and Humour however, which is discovered



covered in composition, and which being more the effect of thought, is commonly more just and solid, though often less brilliant, Genius will not so easily resign its claim to. Indeed, to declare my own opinion upon a doubtful point, where examples contradict each other, it appears to me most probable, that true Genius is, we do not say, universally and necessarily, connected with it; but that it rarely exists without this kind of Wit; though its exertion may, by various causes, in a great measure be suppressed. When these qualities are united together, they mutually assist and improve each other; GENIUS derives VIVACITY from WIT, and WIT derives JUSTNESS and EXTENT of COMPREHENSION from GENIUS.

SECTION

## SECTION IV.

OF THE

MUTUAL INFLUENCE

OF

IMAGINATION ON TASTE,

AND OF

TASTE ON IMAGINATION,

CONSIDERED AS

INGREDIENTS in the COMPOSITION

OF

G E N I U S.

**W**E have already considered IMAGINATION and TASTE as two material ingredients in the composition of GENIUS. The former we have proved to be the most essential ingredient, without which

Genius

Genius cannot exist; and that the latter is indispensibly necessary to render its productions ELEGANT and CORRECT.

We are now to shew the influence of these qualities on each other, and how they contribute by their mutual influence to the improvement and consummation of Genius. Before we proceed to this disquisition, it will be proper to recur to the definition of TASTE, given in a preceding section, which, for the sake of precision, we shall here repeat. "TASTE is that internal sense, which, by its own exquisitely nice perception, without the assistance of the reasoning faculty, distinguishes and determines the various qualities of the objects submitted to its cognisance, pronouncing them, by its own arbitrary verdict, to be grand or mean, beautiful or ugly, decent or ridiculous." The simple principles of Taste are found in every man, but the degrees in which they exist, are as various as can well be imagined: in some persons they are weak and rude; in others,



others, they are vigorous and refined. The external organs of sense, which are the original and fundamental principles of Taste, are indeed nearly the same in every one who possesses in the most ordinary degree the essential and constituent parts of the human frame; but the ideas which are excited in the minds of some persons by the influence of outward objects on the senses, or by the power of reflection, are very different from those excited in the minds of others. Thus two persons, the one endued with a just and elegant taste, the other almost destitute of this quality, contemplating a magnificent and well-proportioned building, that of *St Peter's*, for instance, at *Rome*, will be affected in the most different manner and degree imaginable. The latter, looking around him with ignorant and insipid curiosity, casts his eye on the altar and decorations of the church, which captivate his attention, and please his rude fancy, merely by their novelty and splendor; while he stares at the magnificence of the

F

edifice

edifice with a foolish face of wonder. The former, surveying all the fabric together, is struck with admiration of the exact symmetry, and majestic grandeur of the whole. Or if we should suppose both to be presented, at the same time, with the prospect of a rich, beautiful, and diversified landscape, consisting of woods and vallies, of rocks and mountains, of cascades and rivers, of groves and gardens, blended together in sweet rural confusion; this enchanting scene would be contemplated by the one with indifference, or at least with very little emotion of pleasure, his thoughts being chiefly employed in computing the produce of so fertile a spot; while the view of such a group of delightful objects would throw the other into rapture. It is natural to ask, whence arises this amazing difference in their sensations? The outward organ, by which these sensations are conveyed, is supposed to be equally perfect in both; but the internal feeling is extremely different. This difference must

must certainly proceed from the transforming power of Imagination, whose rays illuminate the objects we contemplate; and which, without the lustre shed on them by this faculty, would appear unornamented and undistinguished.

THE REFINEMENT and SENSIBILITY of Taste likewise, as well as the pleasures it is calculated to afford, are all derived from the influence of Imagination over this internal sense. By the magical power of Fancy communicated to it, it is qualified to discern the beauties of nature, and the ingenious productions of art, and to feel an exquisitely pleasing sensation from the survey of them. Imagination dwells upon an agreeable object with delight, arrays it in the most beautiful colours, and attributes to it a thousand charms; every repeated view of it increases these charms; and the Imagination, enraptured with the contemplation of them, becomes enamoured of its own creation. Taste, catching the



contagion from Fancy, it contemplates the favourite object with equal transport, by which means it acquires and improves its sensibility: it becomes more susceptible of pleasure, and more exquisitely acute in its sensations. Such is the influence of Imagination on Taste, and such are the advantages which the latter derives from the former.

As true Taste is founded on Imagination, to which it owes all its refinement and elegance; so a false and depraved Taste is often derived from the same cause. Fancy, if not regulated by the dictates of impartial Judgment, is apt to mislead the mind, and to throw glaring colours on objects that possess no intrinsic excellence. By this means it happens, that though the principles of a just Taste are implanted in the mind of every man of Genius, yet, by a neglect of proper cultivation, or too great an indulgence of the extravagant ramblings of Fancy, those principles

principles are vitiated, and Taste becomes sometimes INCORRECT, and sometimes INDELICATE †. The only method left in such a case, is to compare the sensations of Taste with the objects that produced them, and to correct the errors of this sense by an appeal to the dictates of Reason, in the points where its authority is legitimate; by which means Taste may attain JUSTNESS and ACCURACY, as by the former exercise it may acquire SENSIBILITY and REFINEMENT, in those minds where its principles are implanted in any considerable degree.

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† Let it not be imputed to fastidious, much less to malevolent criticism, if, in order to exemplify the above remarks, we presume to observe, that in a work of real Genius, and in which the most sublime spirit of Poetry predominates, we mean the *Night Thoughts* of Dr. YOUNG, we meet with several instances of false taste, in his antitheses and conceits, which, in a great measure, debate the grandeur of some very noble sentiments.

Having thus pointed out the Influence of Imagination on Taste, let us now consider the influence of Taste on Imagination.

As TASTE derives all its SENSIBILITY and REFINEMENT from the prevalence of IMAGINATION, so IMAGINATION OWES, in a great measure, its JUSTNESS and ACCURACY to the CORRECT PRECISION of a well regulated TASTE. The excursions of Fancy, undirected by Judgment or Taste, are always extravagant; and if we should suppose a composition to be conceived and executed by the first mentioned faculty alone, it would be an unintelligible rhapsody, a mere mass of confusion, compounded of a number of heterogeneous and discordant parts. Though Imagination has by far the greatest share of merit in the productions of Genius, yet, in one view, it may be considered as acting a subordinate part, as exerting its energy under the prudent restrictions of Judgment, and the chastening animadversions



sions of Taste. In fact, the proper office of Fancy is only to collect the materials of composition; but, as a heap of stones, thrown together without art or design, can never make a regular and well proportioned building, so the effusions of Fancy, without the superintending and directing powers above-mentioned, can never produce a masterly composition in Science or in Art. Judgment therefore must arrange in their proper order the materials which Imagination has collected; and it is the office of Taste to bestow those distinguishing graces, which may give DIGNITY and ELEGANCE to the several parts, as well as EXCELLENCE and ACCURACY to the whole. Such is the province of Taste, and such its INFLUENCE on works of Imagination.

From the survey we have taken of the MUTUAL INFLUENCE of these different faculties, it appears, that they are equally indebted to each other; and that if, on the one hand, Imagination bestows SENSIBILITY

and REFINEMENT on Taste, so on the other, Taste imparts JUSTNESS and PRECISION to Imagination; while Genius is consummated by the proper union of both these faculties with that of Judgment, and derives from their combined efficacy all its energy, accuracy, and elegance.

## SECTION

## SECTION V.

OF THE  
DIFFERENT DEGREES

OF

## GENIUS,

AND ITS

## VARIOUS MODES OF EXERTION.

**G**ENIUS is a word of extensive and various signification. The spheres of its exercise, and the degrees of its exertion, are very different.

Some persons possess such force and compass of Imagination, as to be able by the power of this faculty to conceive and present to their own minds, in one distinct view, all the numerous and most distant relations of the objects on which they employ it;



it; by which means they are qualified to make great improvements and discoveries in the arts and sciences. The mind in this case has recourse to and relies on its own fund. Conscious of its native energy, it delights to expand its faculties by the most vigorous exertion, Ranging through the unbounded regions of nature and of art, it explores unbeaten tracks of thought, catches a glimpse of some objects which lie far beyond the sphere of ordinary observation, and obtains a full and distinct view of others.

We may farther observe, that Genius may, in a very considerable though much less proportion, be displayed in the illustration of those truths, or the imitation of those models, which it was incapable originally to discover or invent. To comprehend and explain the one, or to express a just resemblance of the other, supposes and requires no contemptible degree of Genius in the Author or Artist who succeeds in the attempt.

Thus

Thus we allow MACLAURIN, who has explained the Principles of NEWTON'S Philosophy, and STRANGE, who has copied the Cartoons of RAPHAEL, to have been both of them men of Genius in their respective professions, though not men of original Genius; for the former did not possess that COMPASS of IMAGINATION, and that DEPTH of DISCERNMENT, which were necessary to discover the doctrines of the *Newtonian* System; nor the latter that FERTILITY and FORCE of Imagination, that were requisite to invent the design, and express the dignity, grace and energy, displayed in the ORIGINALS of the *Italian* Painter.

A certain degree of Genius is likewise manifested in the more exquisite productions of the mechanical arts. To constitute an excellent Watchmaker, or even Carpenter, some share of this quality is requisite. In most of the Arts indeed, of which we are speaking, Industry, it must be granted, will in a great measure supply the place of Genius;

nus; and dexterity of performance may be acquired by habit and sedulous application: yet in others of a more elegant kind, these will by no means altogether supersede its use and exercise; since it can alone bestow those finishing touches that bring credit and reputation to the workman. Every ingenious artist, who would execute his piece with uncommon nicety and neatness, must really work from his imagination. The model of the piece must exist in his own mind. Therefore the more vivid and perfect his ideas are of this, the more exquisite and complete will be the copy.

In some of the mechanical, and in all the liberal Arts, it is not only necessary that artists should possess a certain share of Imagination, in order to attain excellence in their different professions; but that share of which they are possessed, must principally turn upon one particular object. It is this BIAS of the mind to one individual art rather than another, which both indicates and con-



constitutes what we commonly call a Genius for it. This bias appears in some persons very early, and very remarkably; and when it does so, it ought doubtless to be regarded as the sovereign decree of Nature, marking out the station and destiny of her children.

It cannot be denied, that a great degree of Genius is discovered in the invention of mechanical arts, especially if they are by the first efforts advanced to any considerable perfection; for invention of every kind is a signal proof of Genius. The first inventor of a Watch, an Orrery, or even a common Mill, however simple it may now appear in its machinery and structure, was unquestionably a man of an extraordinary mechanical Genius. The improvement of these inventions is likewise a certain criterion of a Genius for them; the degree of which talent is always justly rated in proportion to the improvements made by it, considered in connection with the art in which they are made.

We

We shall not here inquire into the comparative utility and importance of the several Arts, whether liberal or mechanical, in order to determine the particular degree of Genius requisite to an excellence in each of them. Let it suffice to observe in general, that as in the former Imagination hath a wider range, so a greater degree of Genius may be displayed in these than in the other. Hence we infer their superior dignity, tho' perhaps not their superior utility. In the latter indeed, Imagination is very intensely exercised, but it is more confined in its operation: instead of rambling from one theme to another, it dwells on a single object, till it has contemplated it fully and at leisure; whereas in the others, it forms a less particular, but more comprehensive view of the objects submitted to its cognisance: it takes them in at one glance, though it does not mark their features so minutely. A larger compass of Imagination therefore is requisite to constitute excellence in the one, and a greater compression of this faculty (if we  
may

may use the them) to produce eminence in the other.

Genius likewise, when left to follow its own spontaneous impulse, appears in a great variety of forms as well as of degrees. Its modes of exertion are very different. Sometimes it leads to philosophical speculations, and animates the ardor of the Philosopher in his experiments and researches, in his investigation of causes and effects, of the order of Providence, and the constitution of the human mind; and while it points out the objects to which he should direct his studies, it adapts the mental powers to the pursuit, and qualifies them for the attainment of those objects, by communicating that force of imagination, and that depth of discernment which are necessary to his success: at other times, indulging its own native bent, it strikes out a path for itself through the wild romantic regions of Poetry and Fable; and from the infinite variety of objects presented to it in those fields of fiction, selects



fects such as are most adapted to its nature and powers. Sometimes Genius, still following its own peculiar bias, sketches out, with a happy fertility of invention, the designs of the Painter, and imparts dignity, elegance and expression to the several figures of his piece. Sometimes it appears to great advantage in the graceful elocution, the impetuous ardor, and the impassioned sentiments of the Orator. Sometimes it displays its power in the combination of musical sounds. Sometimes it discovers itself in uniting, by the power of a lively imagination and exquisite taste, the various forms of elegance and magnificence in one consummate model of Architecture. Or, lastly, taking an humbler aim, it sometimes unfolds itself, not indeed with so much power and extent, but still with very considerable energy, in the ingenious inventions and exquisite improvements of the mechanical Arts. So diversified are the forms of Genius, and so various its modes of exertion.

There

There are many indeed, in whom there are no striking signatures of this quality discernible in any of its forms, who nevertheless possess a considerable share of that faculty by which it is chiefly constituted. These persons, possessing the fundamental qualification of Genius, may, by the force of application, in some measure supply the want of that appropriated Imagination, which confers a talent for one particular art; but can never reach that degree of excellence in their respective professions, which a natural impulse of Genius to its corresponding object, directed with prudence, and aided by proper culture, is calculated to attain. In others, however, the particular indications and EVOLUTIONS of Genius (to use a military phrase) are very remarkable. By attending carefully to these SYMPTOMS (if we may also adopt a physical term) by marking and encouraging their progress, Arts and Sciences may be carried to the highest degree of perfection, to which human Genius is capable of advancing them.

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and endeavoring to bring them to the light of  
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is capable of advancing them.



AN  
ESSAY  
ON  
GENIUS.

BOOK II.

OF  
ORIGINAL  
GENIUS,  
ITS  
INDICATIONS, EXERTION,  
AND EFFECTS.

SECTION I.

OF

THE DEGREE OF

GENIUS IN U.S.

WHICH IS PROPERLY DENOMINATED

OF THE KIND

WE have in the preceding part of this Essay treated of Genius in general, and have pointed out its objects, ingredients and effects as well as suggested its various modes of exertion. We shall now proceed a step higher, and consider that degree of Genius which, upon account of its superior excellence, deserves the name of Original. The observations we have hitherto made on Genius indiscriminately, were only intended as an introduction to the

## SECTION I.

OF

THAT DEGREE OF

GENIUS,

WHICH IS PROPERLY DENOMINATED

ORIGINAL.

WE have in the preceding part of this Essay treated of Genius in general, and have pointed out its objects, ingredients and effects, as well as suggested its various modes of exertion. We shall now proceed a step higher, and consider that degree of Genius, which, upon account of its superior excellence, deserves the name of ORIGINAL. The observations we have hitherto made on Genius indiscriminately, were only intended as an Introduction to the remarks

we propose to make in this book on the subject of original Genius; to explain the nature, properties, and effects of which, is the principal design of this Essay.

It may be proper to observe, that by the word ORIGINAL, when applied to Genius, we mean that NATIVE and RADICAL power which the mind possesses, of discovering something NEW and UNCOMMON in every subject on which it employs its faculties. This power appears in various forms, and operates with various energy, according to its peculiar modification, and the particular degree in which it is bestowed. Thus it assumes, as we have seen, a different form, and appears likewise in a different degree in the mind of the Philosopher, from what it doth in that of the Poet or Painter. It is not our present business to inquire what are the proportions and modifications of fancy necessary to constitute a Genius for particular arts or sciences; as distinguished from each other; since this would be an im-

ticipation



nicipation of what is intended to be the subject of some following Sections. In this we consider ORIGINAL GENIUS as a GENERAL talent, which may be exerted in any profession, in order to observe how happily it is calculated to attain the objects it has in view. We shall only farther previously remark, that the word ORIGINAL, considered in connection with Genius, indicates the DEGREE, not the KIND of this accomplishment, and that it always denotes its highest DEGREE.

Philosophers have distinguished two general sources of our ideas, from which we draw all our knowledge, SENSATION and REFLECTION. Very different ideas however are excited in the minds of some, from those excited in the minds of others, even by the first of these, which may be said to be the original fountain of our knowledge, though the ideas produced by it are conveyed by organs common to human nature; and still more different ideas are excited in the minds

of different persons by the other faculty, that of REFLECTION. Some persons indeed have few ideas except such as are derived from sensation; they seldom ruminate upon, revolve, and compare the impressions made upon their minds, unless at the time they are made, or while they are recent in their remembrance: hence they become incapable of tracing those relations and analogies which exist in nature, but which can only be traced by men of a comprehensive Imagination and penetrating Judgment. Others, endued with these qualities, are rendered thereby capable of associating and disjoining, of comparing and transforming their ideas in such a manner as to perceive almost all their possible relations; by which means they are qualified to discover the latent truths of science, and to produce the noblest monuments of human ingenuity in the several arts. In other words, they by these means become original Geniuses in that particular art or science, to which they have received the most

most remarkable bias from the hand of Nature.

ORIGINAL GENIUS is distinguished from every other degree of this quality, by a more vivid and a more comprehensive Imagination, which enables it both to take in a greater number of objects, and to conceive them more distinctly; at the same time that it can express its ideas in the strongest colours, and represent them in the most striking light. It is likewise distinguished by the superior quickness, as well as justness and extent, of the associating faculty; so that with surprising readiness it combines at once every homogeneous and corresponding idea, in such a manner as to present a complete portrait of the object it attempts to describe. But, above all, it is distinguished by an inventive and plastic Imagination, by which it sketches out a creation of its own, discloses truths that were formerly unknown, and exhibits a succession of scenes and events which were never before contemplated or

from con-



conceived. In a word, it is the peculiar character of original Genius to strike out a path for itself whatever sphere it attempts to occupy; to start new sentiments, and throw out new lights on every subject it treats. It delights in every species of fiction, and sometimes discovers itself in the more severe investigations of causes and effects. It is distinguished by the most uncommon, as well as the most surprising combinations of ideas; by the novelty, and not unfrequently by the sublimity and boldness of its imagery in composition.

Thus much with regard to the nature and characteristics of original Genius in general. What we are next to consider, is its particular and singular efficacy in enriching Science with new discoveries, and the Arts with new inventions and improvements.

## SECTION



SECTION II.

ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHIC

GENIUS.

**T**HE empire of Genius is unbounded. All the Sciences and Arts present a sphere for its exercise, and afford scope for its exertion. But though it may be exerted indiscriminately in all, it will not be exerted equally in each. It will sometimes appear more, sometimes less remarkably. Our present inquiry leads us to consider how and in what degree original Genius will display itself in philosophical Science. In order to perceive this, it may not be improper to consider the peculiar province of the Philosopher, and the objects he has in view. His province is to survey with attention

tention the various phenomena of the natural and moral world, and, with perspicacity of discernment, to explore their causes, proceeding in his inquiry from the knowledge of effects to the investigation of the causes by which they were produced. The objects he has, or ought to have in view, are, to bring into open light those truths that are wrapped in the shades of obscurity, or involved in the mazes of error, and to apply them to the purpose of promoting the happiness of mankind.

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\* CICERO represents it as the peculiar excellence of the *Socratic Philosophy*, that it had a strict connection with life and manners; and that it was employed on objects of the utmost importance to human felicity, on good and evil, on virtue and vice:

Socrates primus Philosophiam devocavit se cœlo, & in urbibus collocavit, & in domos etiam introduxit, & coegit de vita & moribus, rebusque bonis & malis querere. *Tusc. Quest. lib. v. n. 10.*

He observes, in another part of his Works, that SOCRATES had disentangled Philosophy from abstruse

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From this idea of the objects and province of the Philosophy, the intelligent Reader will, upon a little reflection, clearly perceive that vigorous and extensive powers of Imagination are indispensibly necessary to enable him to proceed successfully in the researches of Science. In order however to make this still more evident, let it be observed, that as it is the proper office of this faculty to assemble those ideas, whose relations to the subject it contemplates, and to each other, can alone be determined by the faculty of Judgment; so there are some of these so obvious, that they occur to common

speculations, and applied it to the purposes of common life.

Socrates mihi videtur, id quod constat inter omnes, primus a rebus occultis, & ab ipsa natura involutis, in quibus omnes ante eum philosophi occupati fuerunt, avocavisse philosophiam, & ad vitam communem adduxisse; ut de virtutibus & vitiis omninoque de bonis rebus & malis quæreretur; cœlestia autem, vel procul esse a nostra cognitione censeret, vel si maxime cognita essent, nihil tamen ad bene vivendum conferre. Acad.

Quæst. lib. II. n. 15.

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reflection, and arise from the general laws of association, while others are so far removed beyond the sphere of the common talents allotted to mankind, that they can neither be assembled nor compared, without such an extraordinary proportion of the powers of Imagination and Reason, as is rarely united in one person. The power of assembling and comparing such ideas, in order to determine their relations and resemblances, is the distinguishing characteristic of an Original Philosophic Genius.

We have formerly observed, that the faculty of the mind, which we distinguish by the name of Imagination, discovers itself in a surprising variety of forms. To create uncommon scenery, to invent new incidents and characters in Poetry, and new theories in Philosophy; to associate and compound, to divide and transform the ideas of the mind, is the work of one and the same power; but is not in all these cases executed with equal ease, or with equal success.



success. To invent and create, must undoubtedly require the highest exertion of the faculty we are speaking of; because the objects on which the mind employs itself in this exercise, are very remote from common observation, and cannot be brought into view without a strenuous effort of imagination. Hence it happens, that as invention is the province of original Genius, both in Philosophy and in Poetry, a very great, though not a precisely equal or similar share of Imagination, is necessary in each of them. It will be no incurious employment to observe the various exertions of the same faculty in these different departments, as it will open to us an agreeable prospect of the surprising versatility, extent, and vigour of the human mind; and will also enable us to form a comparative idea of the degree of Imagination necessary to consummate original Philosophic Genius.

The inventive faculty displays itself in Philosophy with great force and extent. It enables

enables the Philosopher, by its active, vigorous, and exploring power, to conjecture shrewdly, if not to comprehend fully, the various springs which actuate the visible system of Nature and Providence; to frame the most ingenious theories for the solution of natural Phenomena; to invent Systems, and to new-model the natural and moral World to his own mind. It is intensely exercised in all this process, as it exerts both a creative and combining power; which, by inventing new hypotheses, by connecting every intermediate and corresponding idea, and by uniting the several detached parts of one theorem, rears a fabric of its own, whose symmetry, justness and solidity, it is the business of the reasoning faculty to determine.

The kind of Imagination most properly adapted to Original Philosophic Genius, is that which is distinguished by REGULARITY, CLEARNESS, and ACCURACY. The kind peculiar to Original Genius in Poetry, is that  
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whose essential properties are a noble **IRREGULARITY, VEHEMENCE, and ENTHUSIASM.** On, to set the difference betwixt philosophic and poetic Imagination in another light by the use of an image, we may observe, that in the mind of the Philosopher the **RAYs** of fancy are more **COLLECTED**, and more **CONCENTRATED** in one point; and consequently are more favourable to **ACCURATE and DISTINCT VISION**: that in the mind of the Poet they are more **DIFFUSED**; and therefore their lustre is less **PIERCING**, though more **UNIVERSAL**. The former perceives the objects he contemplates more **CLEARLY**; the latter comprehends a greater number of them at **ONE GLANCE**. Such are the respective characters of Imagination in Philosophy and in Poetry, as distinguished from each other.

As we have already observed, that an exact equilibrium of the reasoning and inventive powers of the mind seems to be, in a great measure, incompatible with their

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very opposite natures, and perhaps was never bestowed on any individual: the only question is, in what proportion those powers should be distributed, in order to the entire consummation of original philosophic Genius.

If the position we have laid down, and endeavoured to support in a preceding section, shall be found to be just, That Imagination is the distinguishing ingredient in every kind and degree of Genius, it will obviously follow, that this quality must predominate in the accomplishment of original Philosophic, as well as Poetic Genius. Indeed, with regard to its predominance in the latter, there will be no dispute. Imagination has by far the greatest share of merit in poetical productions. It at once designs and executes them, calling in only the assistance of Judgment and Taste, in order to determine whether it has bestowed on the several figures their true proportions, and just degrees of light and shade. Were we to in-

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vert the case, and to suppose Judgment the distinguishing faculty of the Poet, his productions, it is true, might be more regular and correct; but it is evident, they would be defective in their most essential excellencies, in FICTION and in FIRE.

With regard to ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHIC GENIUS, it seems to be generally imagined, that Judgment is its principal ingredient. As this opinion strikes at the foundation of our theory, it will be necessary to examine it with some attention.

Let it be observed therefore, that as Invention is the peculiar and distinguishing province of every species of Genius, Imagination claims an undivided empire over this province. It is this faculty alone, which, without the aid or participation of Judgment, supplies all the incidents, characters, imagery, sentiments, and descriptions of Poetry, and most of the theories, at least, in Philosophy; as well as the arguments (a

circumstance not commonly attended to) for supporting those theories. Judgment only claims the right of determining their propriety and truth. Since therefore, to supply these, constitutes the highest effort of Genius; that faculty which supplies them, must certainly predominate in its full accomplishment; and this, we have seen, is Imagination. There are at the same time inferior degrees of Philosophic Genius, in which Judgment has the principal ascendant. Those persons in whom this distribution takes place, are in general qualified for making improvements in Philosophy, in exact proportion to the degree in which they possess the talent of Imagination; and will, upon account of the superior strength of their reasoning talents, be found better qualified for canvassing the discoveries of others, possessed of more extensive powers of Imagination, though perhaps of a less penetrating Judgment, than for making those discoveries themselves. It is true indeed, that besides those philosophical truths, which, to the

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mortification of the pride of human understanding, accident hath brought to light, and those others which have been hit upon by certain happy random thoughts of persons of very moderate abilities, discoveries in Science have sometimes been made by those, who, enjoying a very small share of imagination, were however endued with a clear apprehension, united with a patient and careful observation of the various objects they contemplated. It must likewise be confessed, that this method, accompanied with proper experiments, and just reasoning founded on those experiments, though not the most expeditious, is however the only certain one of attaining the knowledge of the truths of natural Philosophy in particular. But then, on the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that where an extensive Imagination is superadded to the qualifications above mentioned, the mind, being thereby enabled to comprehend a greater variety of objects, and to combine its ideas in a greater variety of forms, becomes qualified to push its inquiries



ries much farther, as well as with more advantage.

After all, though Imagination must ever be the predominating ingredient in the entire accomplishment of ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHIC GENIUS, yet the powers of REASON must likewise exist very NEARLY in an equal degree, in order to its COMPLETE consummation, and the attainment of the objects it has in view; for if we should suppose Imagination to predominate in a high degree over the other mental faculties, the consequence would be, that the Philosopher in whom it thus predominated, would be perpetually employed in forming ingenious indeed, but extravagant theories, of which his compositions would take a deep tincture; and we should be amused with the DREAMS of a ROMANTIC visionary, instead of being instructed in the TRUTHS of sound Philosophy.

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Upon the whole: as both these faculties, united in a high degree, must concur in forming the truly ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHIC GENIUS, they must always go hand in hand together in philosophical inquiries, as well as exist almost, though not altogether, in an equal proportion.

Thus we have shewn how and by what particular exertions original Genius discovers itself in Philosophy; and have pointed out its singular efficacy in extending the empire of Science. We have also considered the kind and degree of Imagination peculiarly adapted to ORIGINAL PHILOSOPHIC GENIUS, compared with the kind and degree of the same quality requisite to ORIGINAL GENIUS in Poetry; at the same time that we have shewn, that Imagination ought to predominate in the former as well as the latter. We shall now conclude this section with a few slight strictures on the characters of some of the most distinguished original Authors in phi-



Philosophy of PLATO, more than that of any other, is calculated to elevate and to expand the soul; to settle, to sooth, to refine the passions; and to warm the heart with the love of virtue. Such were the objects of this amiable Philosopher; and such is the tendency of his doctrine. At present we consider his doctrine merely as a proof of his Genius. With this view we may observe, that his sublime contemplations concerning the *One* and the *Many*, the existence

Those who are desirous to know PLATO's sentiments on the existence and unity of the Divine Nature, may consult his *Philebus*, the fifth and sixth books of his *Republic*, and his *Parmenides*; in all which they will find the reasoning very subtle; and in some places, particularly through most of the last mentioned dialogue, it must be confessed, very intricate. For this reason, we choose rather to refer the Reader to those parts of PLATO's Works, where his sentiments on the above-mentioned subjects are contained, than to present him with a few detached passages, which could convey no distinct idea of his meaning, where the chain of argumentation is so strictly connected. We shall only observe, that though PLATO sometimes



ence and unity of the supreme Being, as well as the † perfections and providence

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speaks agreeably to the established mythology of his country, yet when he intends to deliver his genuine sentiments, he maintains the absolute Sovereignty and Unity of the Deity.

† PLATO, in his *Politicus*, after delivering an ingenious, however unphilosophical a theory, concerning the various transformations and revolutions the world had undergone; and after having represented it as decayed and worn out in the course of so many transmutations, as well as in danger of immediate dissolution, upon account of the disorder into which its different parts had been thrown, describes the Deity, with great sublimity, as rising from his seat of contemplation, resuming the reins of government, presiding at the helm, arranging the disjointed parts of the vast machine of the world, restoring them to their primitive order and beauty, and bestowing upon the whole renewed vigour and immortality. As this passage gives a noble idea of the omnipotence of the Deity, we shall present the Reader with it.

Διὸς δὲ καὶ τοῦ ἡδὴ Διὸς ἡ κοσμοποιῶντος αὐτοῦ, καθόρου ἐν ἀπορίαις  
τοῦτα, καὶ ποιοῦντος τὰ μὴ χημαδῆς, οὐκ ἀπορροῦς διαδοχῆς, εἰς  
τὴν τῆς κοσμοποιήσεως ἀπορροῦς τοῦτο δὲ καὶ ἀπορροῦς αὐτοῦ  
τὸν ἀνδραγαθὸν γίγνομαι, τὰ τοιοῦτα καὶ ἀπορροῦς αὐτοῦ  
αὐτοῦ



of the Deity; that his theory concerning  
the causes, first principles, and generation  
of

Εἰς τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναγὰς, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρχὴν ἀνα-  
γὰς, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναγὰς. Edit. Mars. Ficini.  
p. 538.

Our Philosopher, expressing his own opinion, by  
the mouth of the *Ælian* Guest, attributes the crea-  
tion of all things, even of the materials of which he  
supposes the animal world to be framed, to one su-  
preme Being:

Ἡμεῖς μὲν ποιοῦμεν τὰ πάντα ὡς ἓν, καὶ ἡμεῖς τὰ πάντα ποιοῦμεν  
καὶ ὅλα καὶ τὰ πάντα ἀλλήλα, ὡς γινώσκοντες τὰ πάντα, ὡς  
ποιοῦμεν πάντα. *Soph. p. 185.*

At the end of his *Timæus*, he represents the world as  
the intelligent, most perfect image of the Deity:

Ὅντα γὰρ καὶ ἅπαντα ὡς ἓν ἔστιν, καὶ ὡς ἓν ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς  
κόσμος, οὗτος ὡς ὅλον, τὰ ὅλα περιέχον, ὡς ὅλον  
ὡς αὐτόν, μόνος καὶ αἰεὶς καλλίστος τε καὶ τιμιώτατος  
γίγνεται, ὡς οὐρανὸς ὅλος, μόνος καὶ αἰεὶς. *Tim. p. 1080.*

And in the same dialogue he lays it down as an indis-  
putable maxim, that God made all things perfect in  
their kind:

Τὰ δὲ ὅλα ὡς ἓν καλλίστα τε καὶ ἀριστα ἔσονται, ὡς ὅλον  
ὡς αὐτόν, μόνος καὶ αἰεὶς καλλίστος τε καὶ τιμιώτατος  
γίγνεται. *p. 1062.*

of things, and the soul which animates and actuates the whole frame of Nature \*; his sentiments concerning virtue,

In other passages, PLATO celebrates the moral as well as natural perfections of the Deity. Thus he represents him as the complete model of justice.

Θεός οὐδ' ἀμὴ οὐδ' ἀμὴς ἀδικεῖ, ἀλλ' ὡς οἷον τι δίκαιοτατος. καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτῷ ὁμοιωτέρου ὕδατος ἢ ὅς αὖ ἡμῶν αὖ γίγνεται ὅτι δίκαιοτατος. *Theat.* p. 129.

He makes SOCRATES likewise strongly assert the doctrine of a particular Providence, exercised in favour of good men. This last, addressing himself to such of his judges as had vindicated his innocence, makes the following declaration:

Ἀλλὰ καὶ ὑμεῖς χρὴ μ' αἰεὶ δικάσαι, ἐνελπίδας ἵναί μ' εἰσι τοῦ θανάτου, καὶ ἐν τῷ τούτῳ διανοεῖσθαι, ἀληθὲς ὅτι οὐκ ἔστι ἀνδρὶ μᾶλλον κακοῦ ὕδατος ὅτι ζῶντι, οὐτὶ τελευτῶντι. *Apoll. Socrat.* p. 31.

\* PLATO'S doctrines concerning the *Anima Mundi*, the Soul of the World, the causes, original principles, and formation of things, the revolutions of matter, and transmigration of souls, are among the profound mysteries of his Philosophy. Speaking of the *Anima Mundi*, as infused by the Deity, he tells us;

ture, and the happiness of those souls who are gradually appropriated to the fo-

Ψυχὴν δὲ εἰς τὸ μισοῦν αὐτὴς θεῖς, διὰ παντὸς τι εἶναι, καὶ ἐπὶ ἐξω  
τὸ σῶμα αὐτὴ περικαλύψει, καὶ κολλῶν δὲ κολλῶν γυμνασίου,  
οὐρανὸν ἵνα μόνον ἱερῶν κατεγῇσι. *Tim. p. 1049.*

Those who are desirous of obtaining full satisfaction on this and the above-mentioned subjects, may consult the *Timæus*, where they will find them particularly treated; and where they will be entertained with a variety of notions strangely fanciful, indicating the inexhaustible fecundity of Imagination peculiar to this great Philosopher.

\* PLATO considers virtue in several different lights; substituting some of its particular and essential ingredients in place of the general quality which they constitute. Thus he substitutes justice at one time for this quality, at another, temperance, at another, fortitude; but positively maintains that it cannot be taught; but must be implanted in the mind by divine fate; an opinion which gives us a very sublime idea of the nature of virtue.

Εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἦν πάντι τῷ λόγῳ τούτῳ καλὸς ἐζητησάμεν τι  
καὶ ἐλεγόμεν, ἀρετὴ αὐτὴ οὐτε φύσει, οὐτε διδακτοῦ· ἀλλὰ θεῶν  
μυστὰ παραγίγνομαι καὶ τοῦ, οἷς αὐτὴ παρὰ γίγνηται. *Meno,*  
*p. 427.*

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vergein good and the supreme beauty of  
that his reflections on prayer \* and on di-  
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† In speaking of the sovereign good and supreme beauty, he breaks out into a kind of divine enthusiasm, which absorbs his mental faculties in rapturous admiration and love of that glorious Object, which his ardent Imagination had represented as inexpressibly amiable:

Τὴ δὲ (ἴσῃ) οἰομένη, αὐτὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ τοῦ καλοῦ ἰδὼν ἡλικί-  
ης, καθαροῦ, ἀμώτου, ἀλλ' ἂν ἀναπάντων σφαιρῶν τὴν αὐτοκρα-  
τίαν καὶ χροματῶν, καὶ ἀλλὰ πολλὰς φανερὰς δυνάμεις, καὶ  
αὐτὸ τοῦ δυνάμει, καλοῦ δυνάμει μοιροῦ κατὰ δυνάμει; ἀρ' οὐκ (ἴσῃ)  
φανερὰ βίαι γινώσκαι ἐκείνῃ βλῆτο; ἀνθρώπων, καὶ κινεῖται ὁ δει-  
κνύμενος καὶ ἐκείνῃ αὐτῶν; ἢ ἐκ ἡδονῆς (ἴσῃ) ὅτι ἡδονὰς  
αὐτῶν μὴ αὐτῶν γινώσκαι, οὐκ αὖτ' ὁρατὸν τοῦ καλοῦ, τικτεῖν ἐκ  
ἡδονῆς αὐτῶν ὅτι ἐκ ἡδονῆς φανερὰ; ἀλλ' ἡδονῆς αὐτῶν  
ἐκ δυνάμει φανερὰ; τικτεῖν δὲ αὐτῶν ἡδονῆς, καὶ δυνάμει  
ἐκ δυνάμει φανερὰ; καὶ ἐκ δυνάμει αὐτῶν, ἀδυνατῶν  
καὶ αὐτῶν. *Symon, p. 1199.*

\* It is pretty generally known, that the nature and qualifications of the duty of prayer, compose the subject of the second *ALCIBIADES*. *SOCRATES*, being convinced this young hero of the absurdity, as well as impiety of addressing the Gods rashly, recommends that form of prayer used by a certain Poet:

vine love and friendship †, are striking instances of the fertility of our Philosopher's imagination,

Ζεν βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἰδὼν καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνενδοῖς  
ἄρμυ δίδω, τὰ δὲ δὲ καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπαλίσθαι κίλιν...

P. 454.

Having impressed upon the mind of ALCEBIADES a deep sense of the importance of the duty of prayer, in which he was going to engage, and at the same time shewn him how apt most men were, from their ignorance of what was really good for them, to ask from the Gods, what, if granted, might prove highly destructive to themselves; he observes, that it becomes us to consider well, before we address those superior Beings, what we ought, and what we ought not to say:

Ἄλλὰ δοκεῖ μοι πολλὰς φύλακας διδοῦναι καὶ σὺψιν, ὅτι τὸ πρῶτον ἐστὶ καὶ μὴ. P. 458.

And a little after, from the consideration of our own ignorance, he infers the necessity of waiting for divine Illumination, in order to enable us to perform the duty of prayer properly:

Ἀναγκαῖον ἂν εἴη σφραγισθῆναι καὶ τὰς μὲν καὶ οὐκ ἀποφασίζοντες ἀποφασίζοντες διακινῶμεν.

† In the dialogue, intituled *Lysis*, PLATO gives us the opinion of his Master concerning the nature of friendship.

imagination, as well as of that moral and speculative disposition, which we have elsewhere observed to distinguish Philosophic Genius \*.

It will perhaps be alledged, that the most sublime notions in PLATO's Philosophy were originally derived from divine revelation, and that he had little else than the merit of collecting and forming them into a system. This point GALE, in his *Court of the Gentiles*,

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ship. SOCRATES, intending to reclaim the unhappy youth from whom the dialogue takes its name, from those criminal indulgences into which he was in hazard of being betrayed, leads him, step by step, from the means to the end, from the consideration of inferior enjoyments to the contemplation of the SOVEREIGN, ULTIMATE, and UNCREATED GOOD, in which all subordinate gratifications ought to center, and on which our most ardent affections ought to be fixed:

Αρ σὺ μὲν ἀνάγκη ἀπειπῶν ἡμᾶς οὕτως ἰστέας, καὶ ἀφικέσθαι ἐπὶ τινὶ ἀρχῇ, ἢ μὴ στανοῖσιν ἐπ' ἄλλοι φιλοῦν, ἀλλ' ἴσθαι ἐκείνου ὃ εἰς πρῶτον φιλοῦν. οὐ γὰρ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα φέρει πάντα φιλα εἶναι. *Lysis*, p. 507.

\* Book I. Sect. 2.

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hath laboured to prove. It must indeed be confessed, that PLATO enjoyed great advantages, and was favoured with peculiar means and opportunities of acquiring knowledge, which he did not fail to improve. Having travelled into *Egypt* and *Italy*, he made himself acquainted with the mysteries of the *Egyptian* Priests, as well as with the more secret and profound doctrines of the *Pythagorean* School; and no doubt by tradition, however corrupted and interpolated, he might obtain some very imperfect knowledge of the fundamental principles of the Jewish religion. Indeed the strong resemblance betwixt the doctrines of PLATO, and those contained in the Old Testament, renders this conjecture highly probable. At the same time it appears equally probable, that as others are very different both from the Sacred and *Pythagorean* doctrines, they are properly derived from neither, but are the production of his own inventive Genius.

DES CARTES, the *French* Philosopher, had the honour of first reforming the Philosophy of his country. He struck out a path for himself, through the gloom which the obscure and unintelligible jargon of the Schools had thrown on Science; and though he could not pursue it through its several windings, he pointed out the track which has been followed by others, and has led to the most important discoveries. He inherited from nature a strong and vivid Imagination; but the too great predominance and indulgence of this very faculty, was the cause of all those errors in Philosophy into which he was betrayed. His theories of the different vortices of the heavenly bodies, and of that immense whirlpool of fluid matter, through which, in consequence of an original impulse, they are supposed to revolve, have, by our celebrated NEWTON, been shewn to be false; though those theories are a proof of the creative Imagination of their Author; but of an imagination too freely indulged, and too little sub-

subjected to the prudent restraints of Judgment.

What DES CARTES was to the *French*, Lord BACON was to the *English* nation. He was indeed not only the reformer, but the reviver and restorer of Learning. As his penetrating and comprehensive Genius \* enabled

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\* Perhaps no age or nation can boast of having produced a more comprehensive and universal Genius, than that which Lord BACON seems to have possessed. He applied his Genius to almost every department of Literature and Science, and succeeded in every sphere which he attempted. Human knowledge was divided by him into three distinct branches, History, Poetry, and Philosophy (vid. *de Aug. Scient.* sect. 1.) the first relating to the Memory, the second to the Imagination, and the last to Reason or the Judgment. With respect to Philosophy, instead of employing his imagination in framing air-built theories, he began his inquiries into the works of nature, with laying it down as a fundamental maxim, that man knows just as much only of the course of nature, as he has learned from observation and experience: "Homo naturæ minister & interpres, tantum facit & intelligit, quantum de naturæ ordine, re vel mente observaverit, nec amplius scit aut potest,"



enabled him to discern and expose the errors of the Scholastic Philosophy; so it qualified him not only for extending the empire of Science far beyond the limits within which it had been formerly confined, but also for discovering those immense tracts of uncultivated ground, which since his time, by tracing his footsteps, have been occupied and improved. He had the honour of introducing experimental Philosophy \*, and succeeded

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(*Nov. Org.* lib. i. aph. 1.) and upon this just axiom, the result of mature reflection and good sense, he founded all his philosophical discoveries.

\* When we affirm that Lord BACON introduced experimental Philosophy into his country, we do not mean to assert, that its use was wholly unknown before his time; but that he was the first who taught and regularly practised the method of investigating the causes of the phenomena of nature by certain experiments. The excellence and advantage of this method of investigation he celebrates very justly: “Sed demonstratio  
“longe optima est *experientia*; modo hæreat in ipso  
“*experimento*. Nam si traducatur ad alia quæ *similia*  
“*existimantur*, nisi *rite & ordine* fiat illa traductio res  
“*fallax* est.” (*Ibid.* sect. 70.) After which he censures

ceeded in many of the experiments which he made. Those particularly, in which, by the help of a pneumatic engine he had himself contrived, he endeavoured to discover the weight and elasticity of the air, in which he was to a great degree successful, though the above-mentioned properties were more minutely calculated afterwards, do abundance of credit to his philosophical sagacity. His moral Essays, his book *de Augmentis Scientiarum*\*, his

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fures the *partial*, *inaccurate*, and *casual* method of making experiments in his own time; in opposition to which he points out the true process to be observed by the Philosopher, who aspires to the honour of extending the limits of human knowledge: "At contra verus  
 " experientiae ordo primum lumen accendit, deinde  
 " per lumen iter demonstrat, incipiendo ab experien-  
 " tia ordinata & digesta, & minime praeputera aut er-  
 " ratica, atque ex ea educendo axiomata, atque ex  
 " axiomatibus constitutis rursus experimenta nova."  
 (*Ibid.*)

\* The design of the book *de Augmentis Scientiarum*, is to take a general survey of human knowledge, divide it into its several branches, observe the deficiencies in those branches, and suggest the methods by

his *Novum Organum* †, and his treatises of Physics and Natural History ‡, have gained him great reputation; as indeed all his works are a proof of his having possessed that nice

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which they may be supplied; an undertaking executed in a great measure by the Author himself in some following tracts.

† In the *Novum Organum Scientiarum*, the Author points out the causes of ignorance and error in the Sciences, at the same time that he lays down certain aphorisms, founded on perception and consciousness, or deduced from observation and experience, as so many steps in the intellectual scale, by which we may rise to the knowledge of universal truths. Those leading disquisitions and experiments are likewise pointed out, which open to us the most comprehensive views of the works of nature, as well as facilitate the inventions and improvements of the arts.

‡ The Author, in his *Sylva Sylvarum*, attempts a kind of history of nature and art; enumerates many of the phenomena of the universe for this purpose, which he calls the third part of his *Instauration*; and in the fourth part of this Work, denominated *Scala Intellectus*, he shews the method of employing the materials of the *Sylva Sylvarum*, by a variety of examples, such as his History of Life and Death, his History of the Winds, and his Condensation and Rarefaction of natural Bodies.

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temperature of Imagination and Judgment, which constitute truly original Philosophic Genius.

In adducing examples of this quality, it would be inexcusable to omit mentioning Sir ISAAC NEWTON, a name so revered by Mathematicians and Philosophers of every degree. This great man was doubtless in Philosophy an original Genius of the first rank. His various and stupendous discoveries of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, as well as of the laws by which those revolutions are regulated; of their several magnitudes, orbits, and distances; and of that great and fundamental law of attraction, by which all nature is supported and actuated; his theory of light, as an emanation from the sun; his calculation of its rapidity, and of the reflection and refrangibility of its rays; his subtil and curious anatomy of those rays, and the division and arrangement of the elementary ones which compose them, together with their union

in the formation of colours, are the most astonishing efforts of the human mind; and while they shew the prodigious compass of that imagination, which could frame and comprehend such sublime conceptions, they at the same time clearly evince the profound depth of penetration and strength of reason, which, by a kind of divine intuition, could discern and demonstrate their truth.

DOCTOR BERKELEY, Bishop of *Cloyne*, was another original philosophic Genius of distinguished eminence. While HOBBS and SPINOZA maintained the doctrine of absolute materialism, admitting nothing but matter, in one form or another, in the universe, BERKELEY excluded it altogether from his system, and denied its existence out of a mind perceiving it. A doctrine so new and uncommon, and seemingly so contrary to the evidence of our senses, could not fail at first to raise astonishment, and to meet with opposition; yet this ingenious Author has supported his theory by such plausible arguments,

ments; that many persons appear to be convinced by them, and to have adopted his sentiments. The truth is, though, relying on the testimony of our senses, we allow the real existence of matter, and are sufficiently acquainted with its essential properties, solidity, extension, and divisibility; yet its genuine essence, or the substratum in which those properties exist, is still a mystery to Philosophers, and will probably continue to be so. Whether the above-mentioned tenet of this Author should be generally received as an established article in the Philosopher's Creed, or not, it must, supported as it is with such strength of reason and invention, undoubtedly be considered as a signal proof of his having possessed a very high degree of original Philosophic Genius.

The last original Genius in Philosophy, we shall take notice of, is BURNET, the Author of *the Theory of the Earth*; a system so new, so consistent, and conceived with such strength of fancy, that one is almost tempted

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to be of the same opinion with the Author of the *Essay on the Writings and Genius of POPE*, who hath ventured to declare, that in this admirable performance, there appears a degree of Imagination little inferior to what is discovered in *Paradise Lost*. His hypotheses of the position and form of the antediluvian earth, of the causes which produced the universal deluge, occasioned by the opening of the floodgates of Heaven, aided by the bursting asunder of the frame of the earth, and its falling into the great abyss, with which it was surrounded, and on which it as it were floated; his opinions of the paradisiacal state, of the agreeable temperature of its seasons, and of the peculiar beauties of this primeval constitution of nature; his theory of the general conflagration, its causes and progress, and of the universal judgment consequent upon it, together with his idea of the nature, happiness, and time of the Millennium, form altogether such a surprising, ingenious, and at the same time, not improbable system, that we cannot help admiring

miring the whole as the production of an inventive and truly creative Genius.

These examples, we hope, will be sufficient to shew the importance, the use, and the sphere of Imagination in philosophical disquisitions; and to point out those particular degrees, and that happy temperature of Imagination and Judgment, which constitute and accomplish original Philosophic Genius. Many other distinguished names in Philosophy might have been added to those above-mentioned; but as the narrow limits of our plan, on this branch of the subject, do not allow our running out to greater length in the way of illustration, so the adducing more examples, in order to confirm the preceding remarks, will, we imagine, after those already adduced, be altogether unnecessary.

SECTION

SECTION III.

OF

ORIGINAL

GENIUS

IN

POETRY.

POETRY\*, of all the liberal Arts,

affords the most extensive scope for the

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\* ARISTOTLE, inquiring into the origin of Poetry, assigns two principal causes of it, a natural DESIRE of IMITATION, and the pleasure arising from the success of that IMITATION:

Εἰκασί δι γίνεσθαι μὲν ὅλης τῆς ποιητικῆς αἰτίαι δύο τινος, καὶ αὐταὶ φυσικαί. Το, τι γὰρ μιμεῖσθαι, συμφύται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐκ παιδὸν ἔστι, καὶ τούτῳ διαφέρει τῶν ἄλλων ζῴων, οἷτις

μιμνῇ



the display of a Genius truly Original. In Philosophy, the empire of Imagination, and consequently of Genius, is in some degree necessarily restricted; in Poetry, it is altogether absolute and unconfined. To accomplish the Philosopher, who would make new discoveries in Science, a large proportion of Imagination is (as we have already shewn) undoubtedly requisite; but to constitute the true Poet, the highest degree of this quality is indispensibly necessary. Smooth versification and harmonious numbers will no more make genuine Poetry, than the atoms of a skeleton put together can make an animated and living figure. To produce either, a certain vital spirit must be infused, and in Poetry, this vital spirit is INVENTION †. By this

ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΣ, ΠΡΟΤΕΡΑΙΟΝ ΕΙΝΑΙ ΤΟΝ ΠΟΙΗΤΗΝ ΕΝΕΧΕΙΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΝΕΡΓΕΙΑΝ ΤΗΣ ΦΑΝΤΑΣΙΑΣ, ΚΑΙ ΤΑΣ ΜΑΘΗΤΙΚΑΣ ΤΟΙΟΥΤΑΙ ΔΙΑ ΜΙΜΗΣΙΝ ΤΑΣ ΘΕΑΤΑΣ, ΚΑΙ ΤΟ ΧΑΙΡΕΙΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΜΙΜΗΤΑΙ ΘΑΥΤΑΣ. *Arist. Poet. cap. 4.*

† The same great Critic observes, that as it is the office of the Historian to relate such things as are really done, it is the proper office of the Poet to relate the kind

this quality it is principally characterised; which, being the very soul of all poetical composition, is likewise the source of that enchanting delight, which the mind receives from its perusal. Invention may be considered as consisting of INCIDENTS, of CHARACTERS, of IMAGERY, of SENTIMENT; in all which, original poetic Genius will display itself in an uncommon degree. We shall consider its efforts in each of these separately.

kind of things that should be done, according to what is required by necessity, or the rules of probability:

Φαντασάμενοι δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἐκείναις, καὶ οὐκ ἐν ταῖς ἀληθεύουσιν λέγουσι, τὸ πρῶτον ἰσορροπία, καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡλικίαν, καὶ τὰ δυνάμει καὶ τὰ πικρῶς, καὶ τὸ πικρῶς. Ὁ γὰρ ἰσορροπία καὶ ὁ πικρῶς, καὶ τὸ πικρῶς λέγουσι καὶ ἀντὶ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν. Ἐν γὰρ αἰ τὰ Ἡρόδοτου καὶ ἀντὶ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν, καὶ ἀντὶ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν τὴν μετὰ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν τὴν μετὰ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν, καὶ ἀντὶ τὴν ἀναισθησίαν. *Ibid.* cap. 9.

In order however to relate the kind of things that should be done, the Poet must possess the power of Invention.

First,

First, in the invention of incidents. Some incidents are so obvious, that by a natural association of ideas, they instantly occur to the mind of every one possessed of ordinary abilities, and are very easily conceived. Others however are more remote, and lie far beyond the reach of ordinary faculties\*; coming only within the verge of those

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\* A person who is destitute of Imagination, must necessarily regard a series of fictitious incidents, which are at the same time surprising and important, with great astonishment; and he will feel it extremely difficult to conceive them to have been invented by the mere fertility of the Poet's fancy. The reason of both seems to be this: Such a person, having scarce any other ideas than what arise from sensation, and the most common laws of association, will be apt to suppose that all mankind receive their ideas by the same modes of conveyance; being ignorant of those exquisitely nice relations of ideas resulting from certain laws of combination that do not operate upon his own mind, but which, operating upon minds of a finer frame, are the source of that rich fund of Invention which he admires, but can scarce comprehend. Sensation and reflection are indeed the common fountains of all our ideas and all our knowledge; but when once those ideas are conveyed into the mind by means of the senses,



those few persons, whose minds are capacious enough to contain that prodigious croud of ideas, which an extensive observation and experience supply; whose understandings are penetrating enough to discover the most distant connections of those ideas, and whose imaginations are sufficiently quick, in combining them at pleasure. It is this kind of incidents which original Genius delights to invent; incidents which are in themselves great as well as uncommon. Let it not however be supposed, that the invention even of these is a laborious employment to a Writer of this stamp; for it is the prerogative of a great Genius to think and to write with ease, very rarely, if ever, expe-

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senses, they undergo an infinite variety of modification in the mind of a man of Genius, in comparison of what they admit of in one who is destitute of this quality. In the former case, Imagination, like a grand alembic, gradually refines; and (if I may use the expression) sublimates those conceptions that heretofore participated of the grossness of sense, from which they were ultimately derived.

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riencing a barrenness of Imagination. He has nothing to do but to give scope to the excursions of this faculty, which, by its active and creative power, exploring every recess of thought, will supply an inexhaustible variety of striking incidents. A facility, therefore, of inventing and combining such incidents in composition, may be regarded as one characteristical indication of a Genius truly Original \*.

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\* It is, we believe, commonly supposed, at least it seems to be the opinion of some, that the invention of a variety of new and interesting incidents, is the most signal proof and exertion of Genius. This opinion, however, though, upon the first reflection it has an air of probability, will appear, upon a stricter inquiry, to be without any foundation. The invention of characters, which will be afterwards particularly considered, is unquestionably the greatest effort of original Genius. In support of this position, let it be observed, that in this species of Invention, the mind has a greater diversity of objects to employ it; and must therefore, in order to comprehend them, exert its faculties with vigour, as well as keep them on the stretch. Thus, in the exhibition of an uncommon character, the Imagination must invent the SENTIMENTS, LANGUAGE,

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MANNERS,

The second species of invention we mentioned was that of CHARACTERS. Ordinary

~~manners, and offices peculiar to it, and judgment must determine concerning the propriety of each; in the execution of which it is evident, both these faculties must be very intensely exercised, particularly the first; since to conceive and represent characters which never existed, but are the pure creation of the mind (for of such only we are speaking at present) must indicate the utmost fertility and force of imagination. On the other hand, though we readily allow the invention of various, important, and surprising events, to be a proof of the existence of original genius in a high degree, yet we cannot regard it as so remarkable an exertion of this talent, as the invention of uncommon characters; because the imagination of an original author in poetry, feeling a native bent to fiction, will, even in its pastime, naturally run into the first, as incidents are less complicated, and therefore more easily invented than characters; but it cannot accomplish the last without the most strenuous efforts. Were we to admit the invention of surprising incidents, as the most distinguishing criterion of originality, we should be under a necessity of assigning the superiority in this respect to Ariosto, over Homer and Shakespear; since we find that a much greater variety of events have been feigned in the *Orlando Furioso* of the former, than in~~

all



many Writers, and even those who are possessed of no inconsiderable talents, commonly satisfy themselves, in this branch of composition, with copying the characters which have been drawn by Authors of superior merit, and think they acquit themselves sufficiently, when they produce a just resemblance of the originals they profess to imitate. A moderate degree of praise is no doubt due to successful imitators; but an Author of original Genius will not content himself with a mediocrity of reputation; conscious of the strength of his own talents, he disdains to imitate what perhaps he is qualified to excel. Imitation indeed, of every kind, except that of nature, has a tendency to cramp the inventive powers of the mind, which, if indulged in their excursions, might discover new mines of intellectual

all the Works of the two last mentioned Poets put together; a preference surely, which neither the dictates of impartial Reason, nor the laws of sound Criticism, could ever justify.

ore, that lie hid only from those who are incapable or unwilling to dive into the recesses in which it lies buried. A Writer however, of the kind last mentioned, instead of tracing the footsteps of his predecessors, will allow his imagination to range over the field of Invention, in quest of its materials; and, from the group of figures collected by it, will strike out a character like his own Genius, perfectly Original.

It may be observed, that there are three different kinds of characters, in the invention and representation of which, originality of Genius may be discovered with GREAT, though not with EQUAL advantage. The first of these are real human characters, such as are found in every country and age. The second are likewise human, but of the most dignified kind, raised far above the level of common life, and peculiar to the purest and most heroic times. The last sort of characters is that of beings wholly different in their natures from mankind; such as Ghosts, Witches,

Witches, Fairies, and the like, which may be termed supernatural.

Perhaps it may be thought, that in the

first of these cases, Invention has nothing to do, and cannot with any propriety be exer-

cised; since to conceive justly, and to express naturally, are the principal requisites

in an Author, who would exhibit a faithful portrait of real characters. It must be con-

fessed, that in this instance there is not so much scope afforded for invention as in the

others; nay farther, that it is necessarily much restricted. But let it be observed, that

though just and lively conceptions of the characters to be represented, together with

the power of describing those conceptions, are the qualifications most essentially requi-

sited to the faithful exhibition of such characters, both these qualities depend upon the

Imagination; for though impartial Judgment must determine how far the intire re-

semblance is just, yet to dictate the sentiments and language, and to furnish the actions

peculiar



peculiar to the different persons exhibited, is the work of Invention alone. It will be readily understood, that we are at present speaking of characters represented on the stage, and taken from real life, in the describing of which we suppose an original Author to employ his Genius †.

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† It cannot be doubted but that Original Genius may be discovered in Comedy and works of Humour, as well as in the higher species of Poetry, those of Tragedy and the *Epopœa*; though the originality discovered in the first will be very different, both in kind and degree, from that which is discovered in the two last.

Thus the Author of *Hudibras* was, in his peculiar way, an Original, as well as the Author of the *Iliad*; and HOGARTH, in drawing scenes and characters in low life, with such uncommon propriety, justness and harmony, discovers a certain ORIGINALITY, though far inferior IN ITS KIND to what appears in those illustrious monuments of Genius left us by RAPHAEL URBIN and MICHAEL ANGLO. There can be no question which of the Poets, or which of the Painters, was the greatest Genius; for the comparative merit of illustrious or ingenious Artists is estimated, not merely from the EXECUTION, but from the DESIGN, and from the SUBJECT which employed their pens and pencils. Thus there is

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The second sort of characters, in the invention and proper representation of which

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a sublimity in the works of the Epic Bard, and in the pieces of the History Painters above-mentioned, which gives them a vast superiority over those of the humorous Poet and ludicrous Artist already named.

We observed likewise, that the DEGREE of ORIGINALITY which may be discovered in the higher species of Poetry, is different from that which Comedy admits of. The DEGREE of ORIGINALITY in any performance whatever, depends upon the degree of INVENTION appearing in it; and as there is in general at least occasion for a greater proportion of this quality in Tragedy and the *Epopæa*, than in Comedy, we may infer, that a greater degree of ORIGINAL GENIUS is requisite to an excellence in the two first, than is necessary to an excellence in the last. In the former, both the characters and incidents are in a great measure FICTITIOUS; in the latter, they are for the most part taken from REAL life; the one setting before our eyes an illustrious model of virtue, teaches us what we SHOULD BE; the other presenting to our view a faithful portrait of our vices and follies, drawn from observation, teaches us what WE ARE. Hence it should seem, that a SUBLIME and CREATIVE Imagination is necessary to constitute a TALENT for Epic Poetry, or for Tragedy; and that a QUICK and LIVELY one, ac-

we observed an original Genius would excel is that of the most elevated kind, such as is raised far above the ordinary standard of human excellence, yet not altogether above the sphere of humanity; such as is not absolutely unattainable by man, but is rarely found in common life, and is peculiar to the most heroic ages of the world. It is this kind of characters which is most suitable to the dignity of the epic and the tragic Muse: the latter indeed hath greatly extended her prerogative, by assuming the privilege of representing every kind of distress, and making vicious characters frequently the principal personages of the drama. We shall only by the way observe on this subject, that though one end of Tragedy, the exciting of terror, may be answered most effectually by this method, the other ends, namely, the raising of our admiration and pity, can by no means

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be  
accompanied with an extensive KNOWLEDGE of mankind, is the principal requisite to a MASTERY in Comedy.



be accomplished by it; since to effectuate these, virtue must appear great and venerable in distress. Though virtuous characters labouring under calamities, do at least in general afford the most proper subjects for Tragedy, as appears from the reason already given, yet we are far from laying it down as an essential rule, that such characters must always be exhibited in this branch of Poetry; for we are sensible, that as Tragedy admits of great latitude with regard to the choice of its subjects, it is a rule which may sometimes with propriety be transgressed; yet we will lay it down as an inviolable law in the conduct of an Epic Poem, that the characters of the principal persons must be virtuous and illustrious. In representing characters of this kind, whether in Tragedy or the *Epopœa*, an original Genius will discover the fertility and richness of his invention. Finding no characters in real life every way suited to his purpose, his Imagination amply supplies the defect, and enables him to form those complete models of excellence, which  
neither

neither observation nor experience could furnish. By the creative and combining power of this faculty, he assembles those shining qualities which constitute the Hero, and exhibits them, united together with perfect symmetry, in one striking and graceful figure. Instead of copying the Heroes of HOMER, or of any other Author ancient or modern, he will present us with Heroes which are properly his own; being the transcripts of those models of genuine excellence, which he has formed in his own mind. We do not affirm that such characters will be altogether imaginary. The groundwork may be taken from history or tradition, though it is the province of the Poet to finish the piece; and the Poet that is truly original, will do this with admirable art and invention.

The third and last sort of characters, in which, above all others, an original Genius will most remarkably display his invention, is of that kind which we called PRETERNA-

TURAL,

truxae, and is altogether different from mere human characters. Witches, Ghosts, Fairies, and such other unknown visionary beings, are included in the species of which we are speaking. Of the manner of existence, nature and employment of these wonderful beings, we have no certain or determinate ideas. It should seem that our notions of them, vague and indistinct as they are, are derived from tradition and popular opinion, or are the children of Fancy, Superstition, and Fear. These causes concurring with, as well as operating upon, the natural credulity of mankind, have given birth to prodigies and fables concerning "Gorgons, and Hydras, and chimæras dire," which have been always eagerly swallowed by the vulgar, though they may have been justly rejected by the wise. However averse the latter may be to think with the former on subjects of this kind, it is certain, that their ideas of Ghosts, Witches, Demons, and such like apparitions, must be very much the same with theirs,



theirs, since they draw them from the same source, that of traditional relation; and, how reluctant soever the judgment may be to yield its assent, the Imagination catches and retains the impression, whether we will or not. It is true, the ideas of those beings, which are common to all, are very general and obscure; there is therefore great scope afforded for the flights of Fancy in this boundless region. Much may be invented, and many new ideas of their nature and offices may be acquired. The wildest and most exuberant imagination will succeed best in excursions of this kind, "beyond the visible diurnal sphere," and will make the most stupendous discoveries in its aerial tour. In this region of fiction and fable, original Genius will indulge its adventurous flight without restraint: it will dart a beam upon the dark scenes of futurity, draw the veil from the invisible world, and expose to our astonished view "that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns."

SHAKESPEAR,

SHAKESPEARE, with whose words we concluded the last sentence, is the only *English* writer, who with amazing boldness has ventured to burst the barriers of a separate state, and disclose the land of Apparitions, Shadows, and Dreams; and he has nobly succeeded in his daring attempt. His very peculiar excellence in this respect will be more properly illustrated in another part of our Essay. In the mean time we may observe, that it will be hazardous for any one to pursue the track which he has marked out; and that none but a Genius uncommonly original, can hope for success in the pursuit.

Should such a Genius arise, he could not desire a nobler field for the display of an exuberant Imagination, than what the spiritual world, with its strange inhabitants, will present to him. In describing the nature and employment of those visionary beings, whose existence is fixed in a future state, or of those who exist in the present, or may be supposed to inhabit the "midway air,"

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but are possessed of certain powers and faculties, very different from what are possessed by mankind; he is not, as in describing human characters, restricted to exact probability, much less to truth: for we are in most instances utterly ignorant of the powers of different or superior beings; and, consequently, are very incompetent judges of the probability or improbability of the particular influence, or actions attributed to them. All that we require of a Poet therefore, who pretends to exhibit characters of this kind, is, that the incidents, in effectuating which they are supposed to be concerned, be possible, and consonant to the general analogy of their nature; an analogy, founded not upon truth or strict probability, but upon common tradition or popular opinion. It is evident therefore that the Poet, who would give us a glimpse of the other world, and an idea of the nature, employment, and manner of existence of those who inhabit it, or of those other imaginary beings, who are in some respects similar to, but in others

94.1 totally



totally different from mankind, and are supposed to dwell on or above this earth, has abundant scope for the exercise of the most fertile Invention. This ideal region is indeed the proper sphere of Fancy, in which she may range with a loose rein, without suffering restraint from the severe checks of Judgment; for Judgment has very little jurisdiction in this province of Fable. The invention of the supernatural characters above-mentioned, and the exhibition of them, with their proper attributes and offices, are the highest efforts and the most pregnant proofs of truly ORIGINAL GENIUS.

The third species of Invention, by which we observed original Genius will be distinguished, is that of IMAGERY. The style of an original Author in Poetry is for the most part FIGURATIVE and METAPHORICAL. The ordinary modes of speech being unable to express the grandeur or the strength of his conceptions, appear FLAT and LANGUID to his ardent Imagination. In order therefore

to supply the poverty of common language, he has recourse to METAPHORS and IMAGES; which,

\* LONGINUS is of opinion, that the use of metaphors and figures has an admirable effect in composition, both by heightening the sublime, and giving greater force to the pathetic; and likewise observes, that while figures give a particular efficacy to the sublime, they receive equal benefit from it in turn:

Ἐστὶ δὲ πάντων συντομία, ὅτι φησὶ πως συμμαχεῖν τὸ εἶναι τὰ ὀρθρὰ, καὶ πάλιν ἀντισυμμαχεῖται θαυμαστὸς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ. *De Sublim. sect. 17.*

He observes in another place, that the crowding figures together, is a method of exciting the more violent commotions of the mind:

Ἀπεὺς δὲ καὶ ἡ ἐπὶ ταῦτο συνόδος τῶν ὀρθρῶν μὲθ' αὐτῶν, ὅταν δύο ἢ ἄρτια, ἢ ὅσοι καλὰ συμμαχίαι ἀνὰ κτῆμα, ἀλλήλοις ἐφαιζέται, ὡς ἐπὶ τῇ πικρῇ τοῦ καλλοῦ. *De Sublim. sect. 20.*

QUINTILIAN admits of metaphors in an oration only, in order to fill up a vacant place, or when they have greater force than those unornamented expressions in whose place they are substituted: "Metaphora enim aut vacantem occupare locum debet, aut si in alienum venit, plus valere eo quod expellit." *Instit. lib. viii. cap. 6.* — If however we reflect, that Poetry, whose capital end it is to please, requires more ornament than Prose composition, in order to the attainment

which, though they may sometimes occasion the want of precision, will always elevate his style, as well as give a peculiar dignity and energy to his sentiments \*. An original Author indeed will frequently be apt to exceed in the use of this ornament, by pouring forth such a blaze of imagery, as to dazzle and overpower the mental sight; the effect of which is, that his Writings become obscure †, if not unintelligible to common Readers;

mean of that end, we shall see the necessity of allowing to Poets greater licence in the use of metaphors and imagery, than to any other Authors whatever.

\* “Sed illud quoque, de quo in argumentis diximus, similitudinis genus ornat orationem, facitque sublimem, floridam, jucundam, mirabilem.” *Instit.* lib. viii. cap. 3. — The above remark, the Reader will observe, is still more eminently true with respect to the influence of Imagery in Poetry.

† It is a maxim laid down by QUINTILIAN, that in an oration the image should be clearer than that which it is adduced to illustrate: “Debet enim quod illustrandæ alterius rei gratia assumitur, ipsum esse clarius eo quod illuminat.” *Ibid.* He observes a



Readers: just as the eye is for some time rendered incapable of distinguishing the objects that are presented to it, after having stedfastly contemplated the Sun. Well chosen images, happily adapted to the purpose for which they are adduced, if not too frequently employed, produce a fine effect in Poetry. They impart a pleasing gratification to the mind, arising from the discovery of the resemblance betwixt the similitude and the object to which it is compared; they remarkably enliven description, at the same time that they embellish it with additional graces\*; they give force as well as

little above, that one of the essential excellencies of Imagery consists in its being useful for illustration: "Præclare vero ad inferendam rebus lucem, repertæ sunt similitudines." This likewise is one of its uses in Poetry.

\* QUINTILIAN, speaking of metaphors, makes the following observation concerning them: "Iam hæc iucunda atque nitida, et in oratione quamlibet clara, proprio tamen lumine eluceat. Neque enim vulgaris esse, nec humilis, nec insuavis, recte modo adiecta potest." *Instit. lib. viii. cap. 6.*

grandeur

grandeur to the stile of Poetry, and are a principal source of those exquisite sensations, which it is calculated to inspire. On the other hand, the too liberal use of IMAGERY even in Poetry (besides that obscurity which it occasions to the ordinary class of Readers, as well as that fatigue which the Imagination experiences from its excessive glare) so disgusts the mind with the perpetual labour of tracing relations and resemblances, which cannot always be immediately perceived, that the tide of passion is by this means diverted, if it doth not subside, and the pleasure arising from poetic imitation is greatly diminished, if not utterly destroyed. A Writer however, who is only possessed of a moderate degree of Genius, is in very little hazard of falling into this extreme. His imagination is not extensive enough to comprehend those remote analogies which subsist betwixt different objects in nature, nor does it possess force sufficient to throw off a bold and glowing image founded upon such analogies: the performances of such an Author therefore

will either be intirely destitute of the images of Poetry, excepting such as arise from the most obvious relations of ideas; or else those which he adopts will be borrowed from Authors of superior Genius. Hence it is, that the images of HOMER have been so often copied by modern Poets, who either possessed not fertility of Invention enough to strike out new similitudes for themselves, or dared not to exert it. A Poet endued with a truly original Genius, will however be under no necessity of drawing any of the materials of his composition from the Works of preceding Bards; since he has an unfailing resource in the exuberance of his own Imagination, which will furnish him with a redundancy of all those materials, and particularly with an inexhaustible variety of new and splendid imagery, which must be regarded as one distinguishing mark of original poetic Genius.

The fourth and last species of Invention, by which we observed this quality to be indicated,



icated, was that of SENTIMENT. An original Genius in Poetry will strike out NEW SENTIMENTS, as well as NEW IMAGES, on every subject on which he employs his talents; and he has the peculiar felicity of striking out such as are most proper to the subject and to the occasion. An universal Genius is a very extraordinary phenomenon. Even a talent for acquiring excellence in the various branches of any one art, is very rarely bestowed; so limited in general are the faculties of the human mind. Thus we seldom find a Genius for Tragedy and Comedy, or a Genius for the more sublime species of History-painting, and for pieces of Drollery and Humour in low life, united in the same person. We have already observed, in a note at the beginning of this section, that there are different kinds, as well as degrees of Originality; we are not therefore to expect, that an original Genius in Poetry should attain eminence in every branch of his profession; it is enough if he distinguish himself in one branch, whatever

it may be. What we would be understood to maintain is this; that original Genius will dictate the most proper sentiments on every subject, and in every species of Poetry, **INDISCRIMINATELY**; but that it will dictate the sentiments most proper to that particular species to which it is **ADAPTED**, and to which it applies its inventive powers. If, for instance, we suppose this quality adapted to Epic Poetry, it will discover itself in the invention both of sublime and pathetic sentiments, which will at once excite astonishment, and penetrate the heart. To a person who possesses a talent for this highest species of Poetry, such sentiments are as it were congenial; they arise naturally and spontaneously to his imagination. The sublime, in particular, is the proper walk of a great Genius, in which it delights to range, and in which alone it can display its powers to advantage, or put forth its strength. As such a Genius always attempts to grasp the most stupendous objects,

jects \*, it is much more delighted with surveying the rude magnificence of nature, than the elegant decorations of art; since the latter produces only an agreeable sensation of pleasure; but the former throws the soul into a divine transport of admiration † and amazement,

LONGINUS, that admirable Critic, illustrates this observation very beautifully:

Εἰς τὴν φύσιν πῶς ἀγορεύοντες, μα δὲ ὅτε τὰ μικρὰ εὐθερά διαμαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ διὰ τὴν καὶ χρῆσιν αὐτῶν, ἀλλὰ τὴν Νεῖλον, καὶ τὴν Ῥῆν, πολὺ δ' ἐστὶ μάλλον τὸν Ωκεανόν. Οὐ δὲ γὰρ τὸ ὕψος ἡμῶν τῆς φλογὸς ἀσκαλομένην, ἐπεὶ καθαροὺς σώζει το φλογὸς, ἐκπληττομένη τὰς ἑρᾶν μάλλον, καὶ τοὶ πολλαὶς ἐπισκοπεύμεν. ὅτε δὲ τῶν τῆς Ἀττικῆς κειμένων ἀξιοθαυμάστους νομίζομεν, ὅτε δὲ ἀναγὰς πύργους τὰ ἐκ βυθῶν καὶ ὅλως οὐδὲ ἀναφῆρας, καὶ ποταμούς, ἵνα τὰ γὰρ ἐκείνη καὶ αὐτὰ μόνον προχέουσι, πύργους. *De Sublim. cap. 35.*

† The above-mentioned excellent Author gives the following just description of the nature, characteristics, and effects of true sublimity:

Τότε γὰρ τὸ ἐντὶ μέγα, ὃ πολλὰ μὲν ἡ ἀσάφεια, δυσκολόν, ὅτι, μάλλον δ' αὖτε τὰ ὀλίγα κατεξαιρούμεν. ὅτε δὲ ἡ ἰσχυρὴ καὶ διεικδυμένη ὁλως δὲ κατὰ γὰρ τὴν καὶ ὁλοκληρῶς καὶ ἀριστοῦ καὶ παύ. *Ibid, cap. 7.*



amazement, which occupies and fills the mind, and at the same time inspires that solemn dread, that religious awe, which naturally results from the contemplation of the vast and wonderful. By dwelling on such subjects, the soul is elevated to a sense of its own dignity and greatness.

We observed likewise, that an Author possessed of that kind and degree of original Genius which is adapted to Epic Poetry, will admirably succeed in the invention of

The *Roman* Critic judiciously observes, that in forming our opinion of sublimity in composition, we ought to consider the nature of the subject on which it is employed, and how far it is suitable to the kind of ornament made use of; because, where the subject itself is mean, sublimity degenerates into bombast:

“ Clara illa atque sublimia, plerunque materiae modo  
 “ cernenda sunt. Quod enim alibi magnificum, tumi-  
 “ dum alibi. Et quæ humilia circa res magnas, apta  
 “ circa minores videntur. Et sicut in oratione nitida  
 “ notabile est humiliter verbum, & velut macula; ita  
 “ a sermone tenui sublime nitidumque discordat, fitque  
 “ corruptum, quia in plano tumet.” *QUINT. Inst.*  
 lib. viii. cap. 3.

PATHETIC

PATHETIC as well as SUBLIME sentiments; if an Author can be said to invent sentiments which rise to the Imagination, in a manner by a simple volition, without any labour, and almost without any effort. Such a person being endued with a vivacity and vigour of Imagination, as well as an exquisite sensibility of every emotion, whether pleasant or painful, which can affect the human heart, has nothing else to do, in order to move the passions of others, but to represent his own feelings in a strong and lively manner; and to exhibit the object, event or action he proposes to describe, in that particular attitude or view, which has most powerfully interested his own affec-

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\* This talent of raising the passions by suitable representations, seems to depend upon an extreme sensibility both of pain and pleasure, joined to the power of describing in a lively manner those exquisite sensations which we ourselves feel. Both the one and the other are the inseparable concomitants of true Genius; tho' there are many possessed of the former, who are not endued with the latter.

tions,

tions, for that will most certainly interest ours: we shall feel the same concern, and share in the same distress \*. Having by this means gained an ascendant over our hearts, he will at pleasure melt them into tenderness and pity, or fire them with indignation and rage: every passion will be obedient to his impulse, as well as subject to his controul; like the Poet described by HORACE, he will raise in our souls

\* ARISTOTLE observes, in his book on Poetry, that there are various methods of raising the passions; that pity and terror may be excited by external action, particularly by the symptoms of distress strongly impressed upon the countenance; but that a good Poet will never have recourse to this method as his only expedient for moving the passions, but will accomplish his end by the very constitution of his fable, and the affecting nature of the relation itself.

Εἰ μὴ ὡς τὸ φοβερόν καὶ ἀλγίον ἐκ τῆς οὐαὸς γινώσκει. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἐκ αὐτῆς τῆς οὐαὸς τῶν πραγμάτων, ὅπως ἔστι, ποτὶς καὶ πόθεν ἀμείνεται. Διὶ γὰρ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς οὐαὸς ὅτι συνέταται τοῖς μύθοις ὡς τοῖς ἀληθεύουσιν ταῖς πράξεσιν γινώσκονται, καὶ φοβεῖται καὶ ἀλγίον ἐκ τῆς συμφορῆς. cap. 14.

every



every emotion of which they are suscep-  
tible.

*Irritat, mulcet, falsis terroribus implet  
Ut magus, et modo me Thebis, modo ponit Athenis.*

'Tis he who gives my breast a thousand pains,  
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns;  
Enrage, compose with more than magic art;  
With pity and with terror tear my heart;  
And snatch me o'er the earth, or thro' the air,  
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where.

POPE.

The

† **QUINTILIAN** considers the raising the passions of the hearers, and carrying them along by the force of rapid eloquence, as the highest effort of rhetorical Genius; and observes, that though many of his predecessors and contemporaries in the rhetorical art excelled in the argumentative part of eloquence, few had excelled in the pathetic:

“Qui vero judicem rapere, & in quem vellet habitum animi posset perducere, quo dicto flendum & irascendum esset rarius fuit. Atque hoc est quod dominatur in judiciis; hæc eloquentiam regunt.”

*Lib. vi. cap. 3.*

With

The sentiments of an Author of this kind are the natural dictates of the heart, not fictitious or copied, but original, and it is impossible they should fail in producing their proper effect upon the mind of the Reader. These observations, by which we have endeavoured to shew how originality of Genius in the higher species of Poetry will discover itself in the invention of sen-

With respect to the higher species of Poetry, Tragedy and the *Epopæa*, it is needless to say how much the pathetic ought to predominate in them; and that to the attainment of it in an extraordinary degree, an eminent exertion of poetic Genius is essentially requisite.

In order to interest our affections deeply in any cause, and raise our passions to the highest degree, LONGINUS requires that the emotion and agitation of the Orator who addresses us, should appear not to be mechanical or premeditated, but to rise immediately from the subject and the occasion: in which case he observes, we shall always feel our minds most powerfully affected:

Αγχι γὰρ τὰ παθητικὰ τότε μάλλω, ὅταν αὐτὰ φαινηταὶ μὴ ἐπιτηδεύουσιν αὐτοῖς· ὁ λέγων, ἀλλὰ γίνῃ, ὁ παθὼν. *De Sublim.*

jects which his imagination pictures  
timent,

ment, are equally applicable to its inferior species; since, as we have observed, original Genius will distinguish itself by the invention of new sentiments on every subject to which it applies itself.

Having considered the different species of INVENTION, which appear to be characteristic of original Genius, we shall point out some other properties which indicate and distinguish it.

Vivid and picturesque description, therefore, we consider as one of these. In the sphere of Poetry, there is an infinite variety of objects and scenes, adapted to the different tastes of those who contemplate them. A Writer however, of the kind above mentioned, disregarding the beauties of a common landscape, fixes his eye on those delightful and unfrequented retreats, which are impervious to common view: to drop the metaphor, out of the multiplicity of subjects which his imagination presents to him, he



he selects such as are most susceptible of the graces of poetic description, and adorns these with all the luxuriance of an exuberant Imagination. We shall readily confess, that a talent for description is by no means so RADICAL and DISTINGUISHING a quality in the constitution of original Genius, as any of the species of INVENTION above mentioned; yet this talent, when possessed in a high degree, bears also the stamp of originality, however the impression may be somewhat fainter; and in the descriptive pieces of an original Author, we can trace the vivacity, the wildness, and the strength of his Imagination. Such pieces will always be easily distinguished from those of an inferior Author, which, in comparison with the former, will be languid, trivial, and common.

A person who is destitute of Genius, discovers nothing new or discriminating in the objects which he surveys. He takes only a general and superficial view of them, and

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is incapable of discerning those minute properties, or of relishing those particular and distinguishing beauties, which a lively Imagination, united with an exquisite Taste, can alone enable a man to conceive and admire. The descriptions of such a person (if he attempts to describe) must necessarily be unanimated, undistinguishing, and uninteresting; for as his imagination hath presented to him no distinct or vivid idea of the scenes or objects he has contemplated, it is impossible he should be able to give a particular and picturesque representation of it to others. A Poet, on the other hand, who is possessed of original Genius, feels in the strongest manner every impression made upon the mind, by the influence of external objects on the senses, or by reflection on those ideas which are treasured up in the repository of the memory, and is consequently qualified to express the vivacity and strength of his own feelings. If we suppose a person endued with this quality to describe real objects and scenes, such as are either immediately

ately present to his senses, or recent in his remembrance; he will paint them in such vivid colours, and with so many picturesque circumstances, as to convey the same lively and fervid ideas to the mind of the Reader, which possessed and filled the imagination of the Author. If we suppose him to describe unreal objects or scenes, such as exist not in nature, but may be supposed to exist, he will present to us a succession of these equally various and wonderful, the mere creation of his own fancy; and by the strength of his representation, will give to an illusion all the force and efficacy of a reality. As all his descriptions will be vivid, so all his scenery will be rich and luxuriant in the highest degree, so as to evidence the extent, the copiousness, and the fertility of his imagination.

That vivacity of description, which we have observed to be characteristic of a great Genius, will in the writings of an original one be of a kind peculiar and uncommon.



mon. Objects or events may be viewed in very different lights by different persons, and admit of great variety in the representation. In the descriptions wherein sublimity is required, an Author of original Genius will fix on those circumstances that may raise our ideas of the object he endeavours to represent to the utmost pitch. Thus the enraptured Prophet, in describing the descent of the Almighty, is not contented with representing the inhabitants of the earth as in a consternation, and the whole mass of matter as agitated at his approach; but rises much higher in his description, and gives sense as well as motion to the inanimate parts of the creation: *The mountains saw thee, and they trembled; the overflowing of the water passed by.* Then follows a bold and happy prosopopœia: *The Deep uttered his voice, and lift up his hands on high.* The former part of the description, where the Prophet makes the mountains sensible of the approach, and tremble at the presence of JEHOVAH, is truly sublime, as these effects give us a high idea

of the majesty and power of the Almighty; but the latter part of it, where he attributes voice and action to the great Deep, is remarkably grand, and is indeed one of the most striking and daring personifications that are to be met with either in the sacred or profane writings. It is by fixing on such great and uncommon circumstances, that an original Author discovers the sublimity of his Genius; circumstances which, at the same time that they shew the immensity of his conceptions, raise our admiration and astonishment to the highest degrees.

To the particular and essential ingredients of original Genius above enumerated, we shall subjoin three others of a more general nature; which however are as characteristic of this uncommon endowment, and as much distinguish its productions, as any of the particular properties above specified. These are an **IRREGULAR GREATNESS**, **WILDNESS**, and **ENTHUSIASM** of Imagination. The qualities we have just now mentioned

mentioned are distinct from each other; but as they are nearly allied, and are commonly found together, we include them in one class, considering them as unitedly forming one general indication of elevated and original Genius; though, for the sake of precision, we shall treat of them separately.

First we observed, that **IRREGULAR GREATNESS** of Imagination was characteristic of **ORIGINAL GENIUS**. This expression is a little equivocal in its signification, and therefore it will be necessary to ascertain the sense in which we consider it.

An **IRREGULAR GREATNESS** of Imagination is sometimes supposed to imply a mixture of great beauties and blemishes, blended together in any work of Genius; and thus we frequently apply it to the writings of **SHAKESPEARE**, whose excellencies are as transcendent, as his faults are



conspicuous. Without rejecting this sense altogether, or denying that an original Author will be distinguished by his imperfections as well as by his excellencies, we may observe, that the expression above-mentioned is capable of a juster and more determinate meaning than that just specified. It may, we think, be more properly understood to signify that native grandeur of sentiment which disclaims all restraint, is subject to no certain rule, and is therefore various and unequal. In this sense principally we consider the expression, and are under no difficulty in declaring, that an irregular greatness of Imagination, as thus explained, is one remarkable criterion of exalted and original Genius. A person who is possessed of this quality, naturally turns his thoughts to the contemplation of the Grand and Wonderful, in nature or in human life, in the visible creation, or in that of his own fancy. Revolving these awful and magnificent scenes in his musing mind, he labours to express in his compositions the ideas which

which dilate and swell his Imagination; but is often unsuccessful in his efforts. In attempting to represent these, he feels himself embarrassed; words are too weak to convey the ardor of his sentiments, and he frequently sinks under the immensity of his own conceptions. Sometimes indeed he will be happy enough to paint his very thought, and to excite in others the very sentiments which he himself feels: he will not always however succeed so well, but, on the contrary, will often labour in a fruitless attempt; whence it should seem, that his composition will upon certain occasions be distinguished by an irregular and unequal greatness.

Whether this quality is to be ascribed to the cause above-mentioned in particular; or whether it is the effect of that fiery impetuosity of Imagination, which, breaking through the legal restraints of criticism, or overleaping the mounds of authority and custom, sometimes loses sight of the Just

and Natural, while it is in pursuit of the New and Wonderful, and by attempting to rise above the sphere of Humanity, tumbles from its towering height; or lastly, whether it is to be ultimately derived from the unavoidable imperfection of the human faculties, which admit not of perpetual extension, and are apt to flag in a long, though rapid flight, whichever of these may be the cause of the phenomenon above mentioned, or whether all of them may contribute to produce it, certain it is, that an irregular greatness of Imagination, implying unequal and disproportioned grandeur, is always discernible in the compositions of an original Genius, however elevated, and is therefore an universal characteristic of such a Genius\*.

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\* LONGINUS maintains, that a high degree of sublimity is utterly inconsistent with accuracy of imagination; and that Authors of the most elevated Genius, at the same time that they are capable of rising to the greatest excellencies, are likewise most apt to commit

trivial



It deserves however to be observed, that the imperfection here suggested, is a natural effect and a certain proof of an exuberant Imagination. Ordinary minds seldom rise above the dull uniform tenor of common sentiments, like those animals that are condemned to creep on the ground all the days of their life; but the most lawless excursions of an original Genius, like the flight of an eagle, are towering, though devious; its path, as the course of a comet, is blazing, though irregular; and its

trivial faults, while they are aiming at distinguished beauties. As this assertion is pretty nearly of the same import with that above advanced, it may not be improper to confirm our sentiments by the authority of so eminent a Critic:

Εγὼ δ' οἶδα μὲν, ὥς αἱ ὑπερβολαὶ μεγέθους φύσει ἥκιστα καθα-  
ραί. Το γὰρ ἢ παντὶ ἀκριβές, κινδυνὸς σμικροτάτῃ· ἢ δὲ τοῖς  
μεγέθεσιν, ὡς πρὸς τοῖς ἀγαθὰ πλεονεξοῦσι, εἶναι τι χρεὶν καὶ παρολι-  
ψήμηνον. Μὴ σὺν δὲ τούτῳ καὶ ἀναγκαῖον ἔσθαι, τὸ τὰς μὲν ταπει-  
νάς καὶ μικρὰς φύσεις, διὰ τὸ μὴδὲν ὑπερανδύναμιν, μὴδὲ ἰσχυρὰς  
τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀναμαρτυρεῖν ὥς ἐπὶ τὸ σὺλον καὶ κοφιδίοντας δια-  
στῆναι, τὰ δὲ μέγιστα ἐκτελεῖν, δι' αὐτὸ γινώσκειν τὸ μέγιστον. *Di*  
*Sublim. Sect. 33.*

errors and excellencies are equally inimitable.

We observed that original Genius is likewise distinguished by a WILDNESS of Imagination. This quality, so closely allied to the former, seems also to proceed from the same causes; and is at the same time an infallible proof of a fertile and luxuriant fancy. WILDNESS of imagery, scenery and sentiment, is the PASTIME of a playful and sportive Imagination; it is the effect of its exuberance. This character is formed by an arbitrary assemblage of the most extravagant, uncommon, and romantic ideas, united in the most fanciful combinations; and is displayed in grotesque figures, in surprising sentiments, in picturesque and enchanting description. The quality of which we are treating, wherever it is discovered, will afford such a delicious entertainment to the mind, that it can scarce be ever satisfied with a banquet so exquisitely prepared; satiety being prevented by

a succession of dainties, ever various and ever new.

The last quality by which we affirmed original Genius to be characterised, was an **ENTHUSIASM** of Imagination\*. It frequently

Those who have a curiosity to know the opinion of **PLATO** concerning the **ENTHUSIASM** of Poetry, may consult his *Io*; where he expressly asserts, that all true Poets are divinely inspired by the Muses; that they are incapable in their sober senses to compose good verses; and that therefore, in order to their becoming excellent in their profession, it is necessary they should be hurried out of themselves, and, like Bacchanals, be transported by a kind of divine fury. As his opinion, however, upon this point, will give a strong sanction to our sentiments on that Enthusiasm of Imagination which we have observed to distinguish original poetic Genius, we shall present the Reader with two short extracts from the above-mentioned Dialogue, very expressive of his idea concerning poetic Inspiration:

Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἡ Μοῦσα ἐνθουσι μὲν ποιεῖ αὐτὴ, διὰ δὲ τῶν ἐνθουσίων αὐτῆς ἄλλων ἐνθουσιάζοντων, ὁρμαδιᾷ ἐκέρταται. *Io*. p. 364.

**SOCRATES** (for he is the speaker) adds a little after:

Λίγουσι μὲν δηπουδὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς οἱ ποιηταί, ὅτι ἀπὸ κηπῶν μαλίσσινται, ἐκ Μουσῶν κηπῶν τινῶν καὶ γὰρ δαεσόμενοι τὰ μέλη



quently happens, that the original meaning of a word is lost or become obsolete, and another very different one, through accident, custom or caprice, is ordinarily substituted in its place. Sometimes expressions, which have been anciently taken in a good sense, are, by a strange perversion of language, used in a bad one; and by this means they become obnoxious upon account of the ideas, which, in their common acceptation they excite. This is the case with the word **ENTHUSIASM**, which is almost universally taken in a bad sense; and, being conceived to proceed from an overheated and distempered imagination, is supposed to imply weakness, superstition, and madness. **ENTHUSIASM**, in this modern sense, is in no respect a qualification of a Poet;

ἡμῶν φανερὸν ὡς αἰ μετὰ τὰς καὶ αὐτοὶ οὕτως περιφρονεῖται  
καὶ ἀλλοτρίως ἀναγινώσκουσιν· κοινὸν γὰρ ἔχοντα τῶν αἰσθητικῶν, καὶ ὡς αὐτοὶ  
καὶ ἡμεῖς. Καὶ ὁ περὶ τὸν διὰ τὴν ποιητικὴν αἰσθητικὴν τὴν γι-  
γνῶσκοντα ἡμεῖς, καὶ ὁ γὰρ μᾶλλον ἐν αὐτῇ αἰσθητικῇ τῇ αἰσθητικῇ  
ἐστὶν τὸ κίνημα, ἀδυνατῶν πᾶσι τοῖς αἰσθητικῶν, ἢ ἡμεῖς αὐτοὶ  
ἐμῶν. *Ibid.*

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in the ancient sense, which implied a kind of divine INSPIRATION †, or an ardor of Fancy wrought up to Transport; we not only admit, but deem it an essential one.

A glowing ardor of Imagination is indeed (if we may be permitted the expression) the very soul of Poetry. It is the principal source of INSPIRATION; and the Poet who is possessed of it, like the *Delphian* Priests, is animated with a kind of DIVINE FURY. The intenseness and vigour of his sensations produce that ENTHUSIASM of Imagination, which as it were hurries the mind out of itself, and which is vented in warm and vehement description, exciting in every susceptible breast the same emotions that were felt by the Author himself. It is this ENTHUSIASM which gives life and strength to poetical representations, renders them striking imitations of nature, and thereby

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† The etymology of the word ENTHUSIASM, which is *enthus*, will ascertain its original sense.

produces

produces that enchanting delight which genuine Poetry is calculated to inspire. Without this animating principle, all poetical and rhetorical compositions are spiritless and languid, like those bodies that are drained of their vital juices: they are therefore read with indifference or insipidity, the harmony of the numbers, if harmonious, may tickle the ear, but being destitute of nerves, that is of passion and sentiment, they can never affect the heart.

Thus we have pointed out and illustrated the most distinguishing ingredients of ORIGINAL GENIUS in Poetry: we shall conclude the present section with inquiring into the first and most natural exertions of Genius in this divine art.

We may venture then to lay it down as a position highly probable, that the first essays of original Genius will be in ALLEGORIES, VISIONS, or the creation of ideal beings, of one kind or another. There is

no



no kind of invention, in which there is fuller scope afforded to the exercise of Imagination, than in that of ALLEGORY; which has this advantage over most other fables, that in it the Author is by no means restricted to such an exact probability, as is required in those fables that instruct us by a representation of actions, which, though not real, must always however be such as might have happened. Let it be observed, that we are here speaking of ALLEGORY in its utmost latitude. We are not ignorant that there is a species of it, which, like the Epic fable, attempts to instruct by the invention of a series of incidents strictly probable. Such are the beautiful and striking ALLEGORIES contained in different parts of the Sacred Writings. But there is another kind of ALLEGORICAL fable, in which there is very little regard shown to probability. Its object also is instruction; though it does not endeavour to instruct by real or probable actions; but wrapt in a veil of exaggerated, yet delicate and apposite fiction,

tion, is studious at once to delight the imagination, and to impress some important maxim upon the mind. Of this kind is the *Fairy Queen* of SPENSER. As in this species of ALLEGORY, we neither expect what is true, nor what is like the truth; so we read such fabulous compositions, partly for the sake of the morals they contain, but principally for the sake of gratifying that curiosity so deeply implanted in the human mind, of becoming acquainted with new and marvellous events. We are in this case in a great measure upon our guard against the delusions of fancy; are highly pleased with the narrative, though we do not allow it to impose upon us so far as to obtain our credit. Yet such is the power of ingenious fiction over our minds, that we are not only captivated and interested by a relation of surprising incidents, though very improbable, but, during the time of the relation at least, we forget that they are fictitious, and almost fancy them to be real. This deceit, however,

however, lasts no longer than the perusal; in which we are too much agitated to reflect on the probability or improbability of the events related; but when that is over, the enchantment vanishes in the cool moment of deliberation; and, being left at leisure to think and reason, we never admit as true what is not strictly probable.

As we are treating of allegorical fables, it may not be amiss to observe, with regard to the kind last mentioned in particular, that the liberties indulged to it, though prodigiously various and extensive, are not however without certain restrictions. Thus, though we do not require probability in the general contexture of the fable, justness of manners must be preserved in this, as well as in the other species of fabulous composition; the incidents must be suitable to the characters to which they are accommodated; those incidents must likewise clearly point out or

imply



imply the moral they are intended to illustrate; and they must, in order to captivate the Imagination, be new and surprising, at the same time that they are to be perfectly consistent with each other. It is evident however, that these slight restraints prove no real impediment to the natural impulse and excursions of Genius, but that they serve rather to point and regulate its course. It is likewise equally evident, that this last mentioned species of Allegory presents a noble field for the display of a rich and luxuriant Imagination; and that to excel in it, requires the utmost fertility of Invention, since every masterly composition of this kind must be the mere creation of the Poet's fancy.

We observed likewise, that ORIGINAL GENIUS will naturally discover itself in VISIONS. This is a species of fiction, to succeed in which with applause, requires as much poetic Inspiration as any other species of composition whatever. That Enthu-

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fiasm of Imagination, which we considered  
 as an essential characteristic of original Ge-  
 nius, is indispensibly necessary to the en-  
 raptured Bard, who would make his Read-  
 ers feel those impetuous transports of passion  
 which occupy and actuate his own mind.  
 He must himself be wrought up to a high  
 pitch of extasy, if he expects to throw us  
 into it. Indeed it is the peculiar felicity of  
 an original Author to feel in the most ex-  
 quisite degree every emotion, and to see  
 every scene he describes. By the vigorous  
 effort of a creative Imagination, he calls  
 shadowy substances and unreal objects into  
 existence. They are present to his view,  
 and glide, like spectres, in silent, sullen ma-  
 jesty, before his astonished and intranced  
 sight. In reading the description of such  
 apparitions, we partake of the Author's  
 emotion; the blood runs chill in our veins,  
 and our hair stiffens with horror.

It would far exceed the bounds prescribed  
 to this Essay, to point out all the particu-

lar tracks which an original Genius will strike out in the extensive sphere of Imagination, as those paths are so various and devions. In the mean time we may observe, that as the hand of Nature hath stamped different minds with a different kind and degree of Originality, giving each a particular bent to one certain object of pursuit, original Authors will pursue the track marked out by Nature, by faithfully following which they can alone hope for immortality to their writings and reputation. Thus while one Writer, obeying the impulse of his Genius, displays the exuberance of his Fancy in the beautiful and surprising fictions of Allegory; another discovers the fertility and extent of his Imagination, as well as the justness of his Judgment, in the conduct of the Epic or Dramatic Fable, in which he raises our admiration, our terror, or our pity, as occasion may require.

Upon the whole, we need not hesitate to affirm, that original Genius will probably

Genius

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discover



discover itself either in ALLEGORIES, VISIONS, or in the creation of ideal figures of one kind or another. The probability that it will do so, is derived from that innate tendency to FICTION which distinguishes such a Genius, and from the natural bias of FICTION to run in this particular channel: for the Imagination of a Poet, whose Genius is truly Original, finding no objects in the visible creation sufficiently marvellous and new, or which can give full scope to the exercise of its powers, naturally bursts into the ideal world, in quest of more surprising and wonderful scenes, which it explores with insatiable curiosity, as well as with exquisite pleasure; and depending in its excursion wholly on its own strength, its success in this province of FICTION will be proportionable to the plastic power of which it is possessed. In case however the position just advanced should appear problematical to some, we shall confirm it by arguments drawn from experience, which will serve to shew, that ORIGINAL POETIC

GENIUS hath in fact exerted its powers in the manner above specified \*.

In proof of this assertion, we might adduce the whole system of heathen Mytho-

• **LONGINUS** considers the introducing visions into composition, and the supporting them with propriety, as one of the boldest efforts either of Rhetorical or Poetic Genius. He observes, that they contribute much to the grandeur, to the splendor, and to the efficacy of an oration in particular :

Ὅρα καὶ μιμνησθῆναι, καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελεῖν, καὶ αἱ φαντασίαι παρεκκινεῖσθαι· ἰδού τοι αὖτε αὐτοὶ οἱ λόγοι· Καλεῖται μὲν γὰρ κοινῇ φαντασία, παντοκράτωρ γινώσκων ὅπου παριστάνει· ἰδὺς δ' ἐκ τούτου κερτακεῖ τὸ ὄνομα, ὅτι αὐτὸς, ὅν' ἰδύσασθαι καὶ πᾶσι δυνάμει δοῦναι, καὶ ὅν' οὖν τῶς τοῖς ἀκούουσιν. *De Sublim. sect. 15.*

After having given this account of the nature and effect of a vision introduced into an oration, he observes, that there is a difference betwixt visions adapted to Rhetoric, and such as are adapted to Poetry; but that they both conduce in producing a violent commotion of mind:

Ὡς δ' ἴσμεν τι ἡ ἑρτορικὴ Φαντασία βυλάται, καὶ ἴσμεν ὅ  
παρὰ ποιηταίς, ἐκ αὐθιγοῦ σι, ἐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὴ ἐν ποιήσεσι τῆς  
ἀντιφωντικῆς τῆς οὐκ ἐκλογικῆς παραχρᾶ κρητορίας, ὁ ὅμοιος  
καὶ ἑρτορὸν τὸ ὑποκρινόμενον, *Ibid.*

logy.

logy. What are all the fabulous and allegorical relations of antiquity concerning the nature, generation, powers and offices of the Pagan Deities, but the inventions of men of Genius? Poets and Priests were unquestionably the original Authors of all the Theological Systems of the Gentile world. A ray, ultimately derived from divine Revelation, did sometimes indeed burst through the cloud of human error, but was soon obscured, if not smothered, by the superstitions of men; and oral Tradition, that fallacious guide, was buried under a mass of absurdity and folly. Though the heathen Theology must be confessed to be the disgrace and degradation of human reason, yet it must also be acknowledged to be a remarkable proof of the creative power of human Imagination; and at the same time that we condemn it as a religious Creed, we must admire it as a system of ingenious Fiction. The *Greek* Theology was of all other systems the most ingenious. What a strange, but fanciful account, may we collect from



those ancient Authors, HOMER and HESIOD, of the nature and employment of the numerous Deities which Greece acknowledged. We find the celestial Divinities, JUPITER and JUNO, MINERVA and VENUS, MARS and APOLLO, sometimes quaffing nectar in their golden cups, and reposing themselves in indolent tranquillity, served by HEBE, and attended by MERCURY, the swift-winged messenger of the Gods: at other times we see them mixing among the Trojan and Grecian hosts, taking part in mortal quarrels, as partiality or favour dictated; inspiring the army whose cause they embraced with their counsel, and aiding it by their power; driving on or stemming the tide of battle, and alternately hastening and retarding the decrees of fate. CERES has the earth for her province, and is the bounteous giver of the golden grain; NEPTUNE sways the ocean with his trident; and PLUTO, seated on his throne in gloomy majesty, rules the dominions of the world below. Need we mention, as proofs of wild

and

and exuberant Fancy, the pleasures and beauties of *Elysium*, contrasted with the torments and horrors of dark *Tartarus*? Need we mention the black *Cocytus*, the flaming *Phlegathon*; the punishment of *TANTALUS*, the ever-rolling stone of *SISYPHUS*, the wheel of *IXION*, and the fruitless perpetual labours of the *Danaids*?

It would be impracticable, as well as tedious and unnecessary to enumerate the vast multitude of subordinate Deities which *Greece* adored. All nature was replenished with them; and each particular part had its tutelar Divinity. Thus while *DIANA* and her train of woodland nymphs, together with her ministers the *Dryads*, and *Hamadryads*, were adored by huntsmen as the Sovereigns of the woods, *PAN* received the homage of the simple shepherds, was considered as the Guardian of their flocks, and the rural God who taught them to play on the oaten pipe. To these we may join the *Satyrs* and *Fawns*, the *Naiads* of the rivers

sporting on the limpid stream, and the nymphs of the sea rising with *Thetis* from their watry beds, and lightly floating on the surface of the waves; the story of *Prometheus* chained to a rock, and devoured by vulturs, for stealing fire from Heaven, to animate his workmanship of clay; the loves of *Jupiter* and *Leda*; the fable of *Minerva's* issuing from the head of *Jupiter*; the wars of the latter with the Giants, and the fiction of *Vulcan's* being hurled from Heaven, with hideous ruin and combustion, by the wrath of the *Olympian King*. We may farther add those exquisite inventions of the *Muses* and *Graces*, of *Fortune* and the *Fates*, of *Auguries* and *Oracles*, of the springs of *Helicon*, and inspirations of *Parnassus*, the dreams of *Pindus* and the *Aonian* maids; the expedition of the *Argonauts*; the labours of *Hercules* and of *Theseus*; the fabulous, but pleasing relations of the golden age; the contention of the *Goddeffes* on mount *Ida*, for the prize of beauty; the admirable allegory of *Prodicus*, in which

Virtue



Virtue and Pleasure are introduced as addressing HERCULES, and the excellent allegorical picture of human life by CENES: all which ingenious fables considered together, and many more of them that might be mentioned, are striking indications of the plastic power of the human mind; and undeniable proofs of true Genius in the original Inventors.

From this general and imperfect view of the *Greek* Mythology, it is evident, that original Genius did in ancient *Greece* always discover itself in allegorical Fiction, or in the creation of ideal figures of one kind or another; in inventing and adding new fables to the received system of Mythology, or in altering and improving those that had been already invented. The immense and multifarious system of the *Greek* Theology was a work of many centuries, and rose gradually to that height in which it now appears. Some additions were daily made to it by the Poets and men of lively Imagination,

nation, till that huge pile of Superstition was completed, which, in its ruins, exhibits so striking a monument of human ingenuity and folly. If, after what has been alledged, any one should question whether the fabulous Theology now considered, be an effect or indication of ORIGINAL GENIUS, we would only desire him to suppose the Mythology of HOMER annihilated. What a blank would such annihilation make in the divine *Iliad*? Destitute of its celestial machinery, would it not be in a great measure an inanimate mass? It would at least lose much of that variety, dignity and grandeur, which we admire in it at present, and much of that pleasing and surprising fiction, which gives such exquisite delight to the Imagination.

It would be easy to confirm the position we have laid down, that ORIGINAL GENIUS always discovers itself in Allegories, Visions, or the invention of ideal Characters, by examples drawn from the Eastern and the  
Egyptian

*Egyptian* Mythology, which was so full of Fable and hieroglyphical Emblems; but we shall waive the consideration of these as superfluous, after what hath been already urged, and conclude this part of our subject with observing, that the Eastern manner of writing is, and hath ever been characterised by a remarkable boldness of sentiment and expression, by the most rhetorical and poetical figures of speech; and that many of the compositions of the Eastern nations abound with Allegories, Visions and Dreams, of which we have several admirable examples in the sacred Writings.

which we admire in it as pre-eminently of that pleasing and surprising fiction, which gives such a delightful turn to the imagination of imagination, and for the most advantageous display of external nature would be easily to admit of a position we have laid down, in the second of our principles, that the invention of ideal characters by examples drawn from the Eastern and the Egyptian



have shown true Genius to be principally constituted.

#### SECTION IV.

Having considered the exertions of ORIGINAL Genius in Poetry at great length in the preceding section, which indeed was the principal intention of this Essay, we shall, in the present section, in order to render the design more complete, point out, though with greater brevity, the efforts of GENIUS IN THE OTHER FINE ARTS.

**T**HOUGH it is Poetry that affords the amplest scope for the exertion of the powers of Imagination, and for the most advantageous display of ORIGINAL GENIUS; yet a very high degree of this quality may be discovered in some of the other fine Arts, and a greater or less degree of it in all of them; as they are all indebted, though not equally, to that faculty by which we have

have shewn true Genius to be principally constituted.

Having considered the exertions of ORIGINAL GENIUS in Poetry at great length in the preceding section, which indeed was the principal intention of this Essay, we shall in the present section, in order to render the design more complete, point out, though with greater brevity, the efforts of GENIUS in the other liberal Arts, and endeavour to ascertain the degree in which it will exert itself in each of them. Of these the art of Painting claims our first attention.

To an eminence in certain branches of this art, the greatest share of Imagination, next to what is required in Poetry, seems to be essentially necessary. Other branches however there are, in which a much less proportion of this talent is requisite, and in which indeed ORIGINAL GENIUS cannot be displayed. We omit, as foreign to our purpose,

pose, the consideration of these inferior departments in the art of Painting, though successful attempts in them may indicate a great deal of ingenuity and skill, regarding only those higher classes, in which ORIGINAL GENIUS may exert itself to advantage.

We may observe, in general, that as the power of IMAGINATION is the distinguishing ingredient of ORIGINAL GENIUS in all the fine Arts, as well as in Science, so in whatever degree IMAGINATION is displayed in either of these, in the same degree ORIGINALITY of Genius will always be discovered. This distinction will exclude all PORTRAITS in Painting, however excellent, and many DESCRIPTIVE POEMS in Poetry, though copied from nature, from any pretensions to ORIGINALITY, strictly considered. Both may discover great vivacity and strength of IMAGINATION, but as there is no fiction, nothing invented in either, they can only be regarded at best as the first and most complete



complete copies of the true original. In common language indeed we talk of ORIGINAL portraits, by which we mean pictures drawn from the life. The propriety of this epithet we shall not dispute. Such pictures are unquestionably in one sense ORIGINAL, as they are the first draughts, of which the succeeding ones are but copies. In strictness of speech however, such draughts themselves are only the COPIES or RESEMBLANCES of Nature, to execute which does not require INVENTION, and consequently does not indicate or presuppose ORIGINALITY of Genius. We must therefore have recourse to some higher branch of the art we are treating of, where this talent may be displayed to advantage, and that branch is HISTORY-PAINTING. The History Painter, as well as the Epic

\* As Poetry and Painting are in most respects similar, it will be no incurious inquiry to examine into the

**Epic Poet,** commonly takes the subject  
of

the degree of Imagination requisite to form an eminent Painter, compared with that which is necessary to form a great Poet. Every one who is in any measure acquainted with the respective natures of the above-mentioned arts, must observe a very close affinity betwixt them, and that to excel in either of them a very high degree of Imagination is indispensibly required. An accurate observer however will discover the different proportions of this quality that are appropriated and requisite to each. Having one common end in view, the representation of human characters, passions and events, or the representation of those objects which are either presented to the senses, or are the creation of fancy, he will perceive that they both accomplish this end by IMITATION, though by a different kind of it. The Poet represents the objects of which he intends to give us an idea, by lively and affecting description, so as to make us in a manner see every thing he describes. The Painter exhibits the representation of these objects to us upon canvas; and, by the happy union of light and shade, and the strange illusion of colours, deceives us almost into a belief of the reality of their existence. Both artists must have their imaginations impressed with a very vivid idea of the objects they intend to represent, and this idea must fill and occupy their minds; but a greater compass of Fancy is required in the Poet than in the Painter; because a greater variety of ideas must necessarily pass in succession

of his piece from an authentic or tradition-  
ary

sion through his mind, which he must associate, compound and disjoin, as occasion may require. A multitude of fleeting objects glide before his imagination at once, of which he must catch the evanescent forms: he must at the same time comprehend these in one instantaneous glance of thought, and delineate them as they rise and disappear, in such a manner as to give them a kind of stability in description. While the fertility and extent of the Poet's fancy is discovered by the croud of ideas which pour in upon his mind from all quarters, and which he raises by a sort of magical enchantment, he has likewise occasion for the nicest judgment in selecting, combining and arranging these ideas in their proper classes. Being obliged to describe objects and events, not only as they appear to a superficial observer, but with all those concomitant circumstances which escape common notice, and in connection with their causes and consequences, he is under a necessity of employing the utmost extent of Imagination in representing the former, and the utmost acuteness of the reasoning faculty in tracing the latter.

On the other hand, the whole attention of the Painter is ingrossed by that single idea, whatever it may be, which he intends to express in his picture. It is true, a piece of history-painting admits of great variety in the attitude, air, features and passions of the different figures which compose it; and consequently,

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ary relation of some important event, which  
forms

INVENTION and DESIGN; the former of which comprehends the general disposition of the work, and the whole symmetry of it taken together, the latter, the particular posture of the several figures, and their different characters as distinguished from each other by their corresponding signatures in the countenance, will require a considerable compass of Imagination; because the Painter, before he begins to work on his piece, must include these circumstances in one general idea, and give proper attention to them in his progress: but while he is employed in a particular department of the work, in expressing the peculiar character or passion of any individual figure, he collects his attention, fixes it on a single point, on the image which is present to his mind; and he delineates upon the cloth the very transcript of his thought. Thus he proceeds gradually, in expressing one idea after another, till he has finished his piece; to execute which requires indeed a vivid and vigorous Imagination, but not so extensive a one as is necessary to form an excellent Poet.

With regard to the respective effects of Poetry and Painting, it must be confessed, that the art of the Painter generally produces the greatest and most agreeable deception; as the materials he employs contribute to the fallacy of the senses, and are admirably calculated to assist the Imagination in imposing upon itself. Hence the pleasure we derive from the view of a fine picture

forms the groundwork of the picture, as it  
does

picture is immediate; while the subsequent satisfaction which we feel, in discovering the justness of the imitation, and its resemblance to the original, increases that pleasure.

To compensate this advantage however, which Painting has over her sister art, Poetry may boast another, in which the former must yield the preeminence. If the Painter has the happiness to exhibit a stronger likeness in those features he endeavours to express, the Poet presents us with a more complete resemblance of the whole figure taken together; for in many cases, words may describe what colours cannot paint. We shall illustrate this observation by an example: Suppose a Painter was desired to represent upon canvas the celebrated Interview between ALEXANDER and the Mother and Queen of DARIUS, after the battle of Issus. In such a draught he would temper the fierceness of the Conqueror with the generous humanity of the Hero, who sympathises with the miseries of the unfortunate. In the countenances of the sorrowful Queens would appear that dignity of distress which was suitable to their situation; and that profound respect which the presence of their royal visitant was calculated to inspire. But history informs us, that after mutual compliments were over, ALEXANDER discovered so much generosity, mildness, and compassion in his behaviour to them, as to conciliate their esteem and con-

does of the poem. The superstructure how-  
ever

fidence, as well as to excite their admiration and gratitude. These unexpected offices of kindness could not fail to diffuse that joy over the countenance, which is the effect of a pleasing surprise, and which consequently ought to have been expressed by the Artist, had it been practicable to blend the air of respectful humility and dejected melancholy, with that of unsuspecting confidence and undissembled gratitude. That this could not be done, must be imputed, not to the fault of the Painter, but to the imperfection of his art; or rather, to an impossibility in the nature of the thing, of giving different and opposite expressions to the countenances of the same persons in the same picture. To do this, the Painter must give us two distinct pictures; whereas the Poet can, in one and the same relation, give us a lively idea of all the different emotions of the human heart; or rather can make us feel those emotions he so pathetically describes. We may further observe, that in order to form a proper notion of a piece of HISTORY PAINTING, it is necessary we should not only be well acquainted with those historical transactions which the ingenious Artist intends, by the most striking representation, to recal to our remembrance; but we must likewise keep in mind the precise instant of time when they are supposed to have happened; because by not knowing, or not attending to this circumstance, the beauty and emphasis of the execution is intirely lost to us.

We



ever must in both cases be the work of those

We shall conclude this note, which we are afraid is already swelled to too great a length, with remarking, that every possible event, with every possible circumstance, may be described by language, though they cannot be delineated by colours. Let us also illustrate this remark by an example: Imagine a Painter set to work on a descriptive piece, that, for instance, of a Storm at Sea. In order to give us a suitable idea of this dreadful scene, he paints the forming billows dashing against the sides of the vessel, some of them overwhelming her, while she is just ready to burst asunder with the impetuous shock of conflicting elements. We see her stripped of her rigging, her masts broken, the ship herself laid almost on her side, by the violence of the tempest; and we perceive terror, amazement and despair, impressed on the ghastly countenances of the distracted mariners. Even thus far the representation is lively; but the Poet goes farther. He introduces some great and uncommon incidents, which heighten the horrors of the scene, and which the ablest Painter, from the unavoidable defect of his art, can never exhibit. He makes the lightening flash, and the thunder roar. He represents the tottering bark, at one time as raised by the billows to the clouds, at another as plunged into the unfathomable depths of the ocean; while, to complete the dismal and terrific scene, he describes the piercing shrieks and dying moans of the despairing sailors. If any one should question the su-

those ingenious Artists themselves. In the design and ordonnance of the one, and in the contrivance of incidents and exhibition of characters in the other, great scope is afforded for the exercile of the inventive faculty. Much is to be imagined, and much to be described. In order to obtain a clear Idea of the greatness and originality of Genius requisite to finish a piece of history painting with reputation, it will be necessary to recur to an example. Let us suppose a man of elevated Genius in this profession, employing his pencil on the celebrated subject of PAUL preaching at Athens, which has immortalised the fame of RAPHAEL. Instead of copying after this ad-

the authority and in the name of his Master. The superiority of Poetry over Painting, at least in descriptive pieces, in which indeed its superiority is chiefly manifested, let him read the description of a storm in the first book of the *Æneid*, or in a poem, intitled *The Shipwreck*, compared with sea-pieces of this kind, drawn by the ablest Masters in the art of Painting, and he will perhaps find reason to dismiss his doubts.

ways imaginable in the countenance of  
mired

inspired Artist, we suppose him to sketch out  
 and execute the whole piece by the mere  
 strength and fertility of his own imagina-  
 tion, taking the groundwork only from the  
 sacred Writings. The account which the  
 inspired Writer gives, though comprehen-  
 sive, is but short; the Painter must imagine  
 the rest. He would no doubt represent the  
 eloquent Apostle as standing on the summit  
 of *Mars* hill, in an erect posture, with his  
 hands extended, and his countenance im-  
 pressed with a solemn earnestness and ar-  
 dent zeal, convincing the *Athenians* of their  
 superstition, adjuring them to renounce it,  
 and to believe in those divine doctrines, and  
 practise those excellent precepts, which, by  
 the authority and in the name of his Mas-  
 ter, he delivered to them. The air and  
 attitude of this affecting Preacher would be  
 awful, energetic and divine: they would  
 be greatly venerable, yet strongly persua-  
 sive. On the other hand, the audience  
 would appear affected in the most different  
 ways imaginable. In the countenances of



many of them, we should discover a fixed and thoughtful attention; in those of a few others, notwithstanding the eloquence of the sermon, that levity and curiosity, which were so characteristic of the *Mik* people. In the countenances of some, we should discern the scornful sneer of contempt, or the supercilious frown of disdain; while a considerable number of them would exhibit in their ghastly visages terror, confusion and anguish, the evident marks of convicted and self-condemning guilt. We should distinguish in some the confirmed obstinacy of infidelity; in others, the hesitating suspense of doubt; in others, the yielding compliance of assent; in others, the spirited ardor of hope; in others, the elevated joy of exultation.

From the invention of such a group of figures, and such a diversity of characters; from the happy expression of so great a variety of opposite passions; we infer the vivacity, the strength, the originality, and the

the extent of the Artist's Genius. To express any one passion justly, is a certain proof that he is possessed of a lively Imagination; but to be able to express such a number of contrary ones, all of which have been conceived by the creative power of his own fancy, is an infallible indication of a Genius truly COMPREHENSIVE and ORIGINAL. In such an attempt, the Artist must draw all his stores from himself; he must invent the figures which compose the picture, design their different attitudes, and express the variety of passions discernible in them, with justness and force. By accomplishing these purposes, the illusion is rendered complete. Every figure in the piece is animated with nature, and flushed with life; and the whole painting, taken together, at once delights the imagination, and speaks to the heart †.

We

† That excellent Critic, whom we have had such frequent occasion to quote, seems to think, that, in some

We shall only further observe on this subject, that though ORIGINAL GENIUS is displayed in the highest degree and in the noblest sphere in HISTORY-PAINTING, yet it may sometimes be discovered, in no inconsiderable measure, in DESCRIPTIVE PIECES; at least where the ingenious Artist, instead of copying real objects, exhibits, as in the former case, such as are the mere creation of his own fancy. Even Landscapes, Grotesques, and pieces of Still Life, when they are invented by this plastic power of the mind, and not imitated from scenes that actually exist, indicate an originality

in some cases, a good picture may produce a stronger effect upon the mind of the spectator, than a good oration upon the mind of the hearer. Speaking of the efficacy of gesture and action, he observes;

“Nec mirum si ista, quæ tamen in aliquo sunt posita motu, tantum in animis valent; quum pictura, tacens opus & habitus semper ejusdem, sic in intimos penetret affectus, ut ipsam vim dicendi nonnunquam superare videatur.”

QUINTIL. Instit. lib. ii. cap. 3.

of



of Genius suitable to the objects on which it is employed. Thus we have seen what those branches in the art of Painting are, in which original Genius will discover itself; and how, and in what degree, it will exert itself in those branches. Let us next consider how far this singular talent may be displayed in the art of Eloquence, and what its efforts will probably be in that art.

ARISTOTLE, that acute Philosopher as well as judicious Critic, hath defined RHETORIC to be the power of discovering in every subject the topics most suitably adapted to the purposes of persuasion \*. This definition appears to be just in general, as it includes the principal object of Eloquence, which is doubtless to persuade, by

\* *ῥητορικὴ δὲ ἐστὶν ἀναζητῆς ἐν παντί τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀποδείξεως καὶ ἀποκρίσεως ἐν λόγῳ.* ARISTOT. lib. i. cap. 2.

convincing the judgment, and influencing the passions. To attain this object, a variety of qualifications, rarely united in one person, are requisite. An extensive and exuberant imagination, a penetrating judgment, an intimate acquaintance with human nature, with the various tempers and passions of mankind \*, and their various operations, must concur to form the accomplished Orator †. Besides these fundamental qualifications, an exquisite sensibility of passion, an ardent, impetuous, and assiduous feeling, by which he is himself ac-

\* “ Quis enim nescit maximam vim existere Oratoris in hominum mentibus, vel ad iram, aut ad odium, aut dolorem incitandis, vel ab hisce iisdem permotionibus ad lenitatem, misericordiamque revocandis? quæ nisi qui naturas hominum, vimque omnem humanitatis, causasque eas, quibus mentes aut incitantur, aut reflectantur, penitus perspexerit: dicendo, quod volet, perficere non poterit.” Cicerò de Oratore, lib. I. cap. 12.

† These who are desirous to know the various qualifications requisite to form a complete Orator, may consult the fifth chapter of the first book of Cicerò de Oratore.

overpowering

overpowering enthusiasm of imagination, are essentially requisite to a mastery and success in the rhetorical art, and particularly distinguish an ORIGINAL GENIUS in that profession †. By possessing the first of these qualities, the Orator is enabled to feel every sentiment which he utters, and participate every emotion which he describes. By possessing the last, in conjunction with the other, he is enabled, by a torrent of rapid eloquence, to convey to the hearts of his hearers, those strong and enthusiastic feelings, by which he is himself actuated.

CICERO, considering the causes why so few eminent Orators have appeared in any age or country, accounts for the fact from the inconceivable difficulty of attaining distinguished excellence in Eloquence.

“ Quis enim aliud in maxima discentium multitudine, summa magistrorum copia, præstantissimorum hominum ingeniis, infinita causarum varietate, amplissimis Eloquentiæ propositis præmiis, esse causam putet, nisi rei quandam incredibilem magnitudinem, et ac difficultatem? ” *De Oratore*, lib. iii. cap. 31.



We may farther observe, that a person endued with an original Genius for Eloquence, will at one glance, by a kind of intuition, distinguish and select the most proper, as well as most powerful topics of persuasion on every subject, and will urge them with irresistible energy. These topics will, for the most part, be very extraordinary, and altogether unexpected; but they will constantly produce the intended effect. They will operate upon the mind by surprise; they will strike like lightning, and penetrate the heart at once.

We shall produce a few instances of this impassioned and persuasive Eloquence, from those illustrious ancient Orators, DEMOSTHENES and CICERO, in order to exemplify the above remarks; and shall translate the passages for the sake of the English Reader. The following passage is taken from that celebrated oration of DEMOSTHENES, which procured the banishment of

ÆSCHINES,

ESCHINES, his enemy and rival, CLE-  
 SIPHON having proposed that a Crown of  
 Gold should be presented to DEMOSTHE-  
 NES, as a testimony of the respect of his  
 fellow-citizens, upon account of the remi-  
 nent services he had done to his country;  
 ESCHINES strenuously opposed the motion,  
 as contrary to the laws; and ventured to  
 arraign his rival before the Athenian people,  
 accusing him of misconduct in the course  
 of his ministry, and charging him with  
 being the author of all the calamities  
 brought upon the Athenians by their war  
 with PHILIP. DEMOSTHENES, having vin-  
 dicated his character in general from the  
 unjust aspersions thrown upon it by ESCH-  
 NES, proceeds to justify the particular mea-  
 sures which he had concerted, with the  
 approbation of other leading men in the  
 administration, notwithstanding the event  
 of those measures had been unsuccessful.  
 Thus

t Ville DEMOSTH. de Corone.

Thus he introduces his spirited argumen-  
tation \*.

This should be presented to the reader of his

Επειδὴ δὲ πολλοὺς τοὺς συμβεβηκότας εἰπεται βουλομαι τι  
καὶ παραδοξοῖν ἵππειν· καὶ μὴ ὡς Διὸς καὶ Διὸν, μηδὲ τὴν  
ἐπιβόλην Διομαχῆς, ἀλλὰ μὲν ἰσχυρὰ ἢ λίγη διαφασταῖ. Εἰ  
οὐκ ἔστι ἀπὸ τοῦ παραδοξοῦ τὰ μέλλοντα γινώσκειν, καὶ προνοεῖν  
παντός, καὶ οὐ προνοεῖν Διὸς, καὶ διαφαστὸν τὸν βῆμα καὶ  
κίβδηλον, ὡς οὐκ ἐφείλετο, οὐδ' ἂν ἀπογὰς τὴν πόλιν τούτων  
ἐν ἰσχυρῇ ἢ ἀσθενείᾳ, ἢ ὡς προνοεῖν, ἢ τὴν μέλλουσαν αἰὶνῶν ἀν-  
ταρξίαν. Ναι μὲν γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς δοκῆς τὴν πραγμασίαν, ἢ παρὰ νόμον  
ἐστὶν ἀνθρώποις, οὕτως τὸ Διὶ ταῦτα δοκῇ. Τότε δ' ἀξίονα πρὸς  
ταῖς τῶν ἀλλῶν, οὕτως ἀπογὰς τούτου, οὐδὲν προνοεῖται  
ἀπὸ τοῦ, ὡς ἐστὶν ἀνταρξία. Εἰ γὰρ ταῦτα πρὸς τὴν ἀκρίβειαν  
οὐδὲν κινδυνὸν ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῶν ὑπομνήματι δι' ὡς προνοεῖν, τὰ ἡμῶν  
τελευτῶν αἰὶν. Μὴ γὰρ τὸς πολλοὺς γινώσκω, μὴ ἀμύ. Τοιοῦτο δ' ἐστὶν  
ἐξ ἡμῶν, ὡς Διὸς, ἵστανται αἱ τοὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει ἀνθρώπων ἀντι-  
στασιαί, εἰ τὰ μὴ πρὸς τὴν ἀκρίβειαν ἐστὶν οὕτως ἀνταρξία. Ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν  
ἐπειδὴ πρὸς τὴν ἀκρίβειαν ἐστὶν, τὰ δὲ οὕτως τὸ μὴ κινδυνὸν ταῦτα  
ἀνταρξία, ἵστανται χωρὶς ἡμῶν, ὡς ἀντιστασιαί. Καὶ ταῦτα μὴ  
ἐν τῇ πόλει τοῦ πολλοῦ, ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις χωρὶς ἀπὸ τῆς ἀκρίβειας  
ἀλλὰ, ὡς τὰ μὴ τῶν πολλῶν κινδυνὸν ἔστιν ἀνταρξία.

"But since my adversary lays so much stress upon  
events, I will venture to advance a paradox; and in  
the name of JUPITER and all the Gods, let none of  
you wonder at the apparent hyperbole, but let every  
one attend with candour to what I am going to say.  
If the things which afterwards happened had been ma-  
nifest



This great Orator having by the above,

How as, ~~subjoined~~ ~~two~~ ~~did~~ ~~to~~ ~~show~~ ~~and~~

interest to all, and all had foreseen them; if even you, *ÆSCHINES*, had foretold and declared them with your bawling and thundering voice, who by the way never till now uttered a word concerning them; even in that case *Athens* ought by no means to have altered its measures, if it had any regard to its own glory, to the glory of its ancestors, or to that of succeeding generations. At present indeed it seems to have fallen from its pristine grandeur; a misfortune common to all states and all men, whenever the Deity is pleased to order it so. But *Athens*, having once been thought worthy of the precedence of all the other *Grecian* Republics, could not relinquish this glorious claim, nor plead an exemption from the dangers attending it, without incurring the blame and disgrace of abandoning the common interest to the rapacious ambition of *PHILIP*. If it had relinquished, without a struggle, those privileges which our ancestors braved every danger to maintain, who, *ÆSCHINES*, would not have despised your timid prudence? for no share of the blame could justly have fallen on the other members of the commonwealth, or upon me. — Great God! with what eyes should we in that case have looked upon this great multitude, assembled from all parts of *Greece*, now hearing me, if things had come, by our own faults, to the condition we see them in at present; and *PHILIP* had been created Generalissimo and Sovereign of all the *Greeks*, without our having united

and many other striking arguments, evinced the rectitude of his own conduct, as well as of the conduct of his partners in the administration; in carrying on the war against *Pericles*, comes next to touch upon the battle of *Chæronea*, which had been so fatal to the *Athenians*; and as the defeat they had there sustained was supposed to be a consequence of the measures that had been adopted, this defeat was, by his enemies particularly, charged upon *Demosthenes*, as having been the principal author of the measures which brought on that unhappy event. The vindication of himself and his fellow-citizens, who had been either the advisers or sharers of that unfortunate, but glorious engagement, by the following astonishing and sublime Oath, is

our aid, with that of the other *Grecian* States, in order to prevent so great an indignity! especially when we consider, that in former times it hath been always the character of the *Athenian* Republic to prefer glorious danger to dishonourable safety.

one of the boldest flights of rhetorical  
Genius.

This is one of those strokes of Eloquence, which produce the intended effect by an instantaneous and irresistible impulse, whirling away the souls of the

† ΑΛΛ' ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ὅπως ἡμαρτὸς ἀνδρὶς ἀθηναίοις, τοῦ  
ὅπου τῆς ἀπορίας ἀποδοῦναι, καὶ οὐτοῦτος, κινδυνὸς ἀσφαλῆς.

[illegible]

—“ But it cannot be, *Athenians*, it cannot be, that you have erred in exposing your lives for the freedom and safety of *Greece*. — No, you have not erred, I swear by your illustrious ancestors, who hazarded their lives in support of the same glorious cause in the fields of *Marathon*, by those who made so brave a stand at *Platæa*, by those who fought in the sea-engagement at *Salamin*, by those who fell at *Artemisium*, and lastly by those many other excellent soldiers and citizens, the martyrs of liberty, who lie interred in public monuments, which this city, regarding them as worthy of such an honour, hath raised to their memory and fame.”



hearers at once, without leaving them time to weigh the motives of conviction or persuasion.

The Orator, having invigorated against the indecision of the Athenians in suffering Philip to

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\* An Orator of common Genius would never have thought of so extraordinary a method of argumentation, as DEMOSTHENES here uses, for vindicating the conduct of the Athenians in hazarding the battle of *Charonea*, and for reconciling them to the loss of it. He would probably have satisfied himself with producing precedents of the same kind, and with observing that their ancestors had fought the battles of *Marathon*, *Platæa*, *Bulamin* and *Artemisium*, in defence of the liberties of Greece; but the Athenian Orator, instead of this cool reasoning, hurried away by the enthusiasm and impetuosity of his own Genius, sets before their eyes, as it were by the most sublime and striking figure, the awful shades of their fathers, who had sacrificed their lives in the cause of Liberty. By swearing by those illustrious Heroes, he raises them above the condition of humanity, and proposes them both as the objects of admiration and imitation. Nothing indeed could have been more happily calculated for comforting the Athenians under the defeat they had sustained at *Charonea*, and raising their dejected spirits, than this solemn appeal to their ancestors, by which the Orator seems to put that defeat on a level with the victories

The last quotation we shall produce from the Orations of DEMOSTHENES, shall be taken from his first *Philippic*. The Orator, having inveighed against the indolence of the *Athenians* in suffering PHILIP to

victories which they had obtained at *Marathon*, *Plataea*, *Salamis*, and *Artemisium*.

Those who are desirous of seeing the above celebrated passage illustrated in the truest taste of Criticism, may consult the sixteenth chapter of LONGINUS's Treatise on the Sublime; where that excellent Judge of the beauties of Composition hath observed, that by this single figure, which he calls an *Apostrophe*, the Orator hath enrolled those ancient Heroes among the Gods, and taught us that it is proper to swear by such as die in the same manner:

οὐρανὸν δὲ καὶ τὰ ἐν ὁμίᾳ κρυμμένα ὅτι ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἀποφασίζουσιν ὅτι, οὐδὲν τὸ ἀποδιδόναι, ὅτι, οὐδὲν τὸ ἀποδιδόναι, ὅτι, οὐδὲν τὸ ἀποδιδόναι.

From this short specimen, our Readers will perceive that the Critic in his illustration rivals the sublimity of the Orator. For farther satisfaction we must refer them to the above-mentioned chapter, the limits of our plan not allowing us to swell out the page with quotations.

extend his conquests without molestation, addresses them in the following close, pointed and energetic interrogatories, so worthy of the Orator and the Patriot.

*The*

Ποτ' ἐν ἡμῶν ἀνδρες ἀθηναῖοι, ποτὶ ἂν χρὴ παραίτεσι. Ἐπιδαν  
 τίθενται; ἰπιδαν ἢ διὰ ἀναγκῆς; ἢ οὐκ ἔστι τι χρὴ ταῖς ἡμε-  
 ραῖς ἡγεσθαι; ἔγωγε γὰρ οἶμαι τοῖς λευθεροῖς μέγιστον ἀναγκῆς  
 τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν πραγμάτων αἰσχύνειν. Ἡ βουλὴ δὲ αὐτῇ μοι  
 παρὸντες αὐτῶν συνθῆκεν κατὰ τὴν ἀγορᾶν, λήγεται τι καί-  
 νη; γινώσκω γὰρ αὐτὴ καὶ νεώτερον, ἢ μάλιστα αὐτῶν ἀθηναίων κα-  
 τὰ δόμῳ, καὶ τὰς τῶν ἑλλήνων δόξαι; τίθεται φιλικῶς  
 οὐ μὰ δὲ, ἀλλ' αἰδοῦν. Τί δὲ μὲν διαφέρει; καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἰσθμῷ  
 τί παρὰ ταχὺς ὑμῖν ἴτεροι φιλικῶς ποιοῦνται, αἱ παρὰ αὐ-  
 τῶν προσέχοντες τοῖς πρᾶγμασι τοῖς ἰσθμῷ καὶ αὐτῶν παρὰ αὐ-  
 ταῖς ῥῆμασι τούτοις ἐπὶ τίθεται ὅσον παρὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀνα-  
 λήν.

“When, Athenians, when will you act as you ought? When shall some extraordinary event rouse you? When shall some imminent necessity compel you? But what shall we think of the present juncture, and of the events which have already happened? For my part, I look upon the disgracefulness of our past conduct, to be the strongest incentive, the most urgent necessity to free men to alter their measures; and act a more spirited part. Or tell me, Do you rather incline, according to your usual custom, to saunter about idle, asking each other in the forum, What news? Can there

be



The *Athenian* Orator paints the idle curiosity of his countrymen with great mastery in the above short question, *τί νυν ἀκούετε?* "What news?" and the eloquent Apostle of the Gentiles confirms this character of the *Athenians*, by the observation which he made on their conduct during his abode among them. He tells us, that "they spent their time wholly in hearing, and relating some new thing."

The interrogation of the Orator, *τί νυν ἀκούετε;* *ye, ὅτι Πύρρος ἢ Μανδράκιον ἀκούετε;*

be any thing more new, than that a man of *Macedonia* has dared to make war on the *Athenians*, and goes against the rest of *Greece*? Is *PHILIP* dead? says one: No, replies another, but he is certainly sick. What, pray, does either signify to you? For whatever be his case, whether he be sick or dead, you will soon raise up another *PHILIP*, while you manage your affairs in so listless and indolent a manner; for he hath attained his present grandeur, more through your inactivity than his own bravery.

† Acts xvii. 21. according to your usual custom, taking each other in the forum. Can there be

Can there be any thing more new, than that a man of Macedonia makes war upon the Athenians, and governs the rest of Greece? is highly spirited and poignant; shews the disdain with which DEMOSTHENES himself viewed the insolence of PHILIP, and was admirably calculated to produce a sense of honest shame in the minds of his countrymen, to rouse their ancient spirit of liberty, and excite the strongest jealousy of the designs of the Macedonian Monarch. The art and address of the Orator is in these respects truly admirable. Every one must perceive the keen and exquisitely fine irony of the following question, Τὸντις φιλίππος? *Is PHILIP dead?* and of the answer, οὐκ ἔστι, ἀλλ' ἀσθενῶν; *He is not dead, but he is sick.*

These few quotations will give the Reader some faint idea of the originality and spirit, of the sublimity and energy, of the eloquence of DEMOSTHENES. We shall next produce

produce a few passages from the Orations of Cicerō, which will also serve to illustrate the preceding remarks on original Rhetorical Genius.

The Roman Orator having, with the other senators, obtained certain information of the execrable conspiracy of CATILINE, breaks forth in a torrent of abrupt, vehement, and rapid eloquence, in the following address to this chief of the conspirators, whom he pointed out to the whole assembled senate.

So

Quousque tandem abutere Catilina patientia nostra? Quamdiu etiam furor iste tuus nos eludet? Quem ad finem sese effrenata jactabit audacia? Nihilne te nocturnum præsidium palatii, nihil urbis vigiliæ, nihil timor populi, nihil concursus bonorum omnium, nihil hic munitissimus habendi senatus locus, nihil horum ora vultusque moverunt? Patere tua consilia non sentis? constrictam jam horum omnium conscientia teneri conjurationem tuam non vides? Quid proxima, quid superiore nocte egeris, ubi fueris, quos convocaveris, quid consilii ceperis

quem





even the audacious CATILINE. Cicero, we may observe in the above instance, departs from a general rule, which, with great propriety, requires for the most part, that the exordium of an oration be cool and dispassionate. The observance of this rule indeed depends upon the subject and the occasion; and surely the occasion of the oration to which we refer, demanded the utmost vehemence and energy.

The Orator transgresses the same rule with equal propriety in his fourth Oration against CATILINE, which is animated and interesting from the beginning. Having, in the introduction to his discourse, acknowledged in a very graceful manner the grateful sense he had of the Senate's concern for his safety, he comes, by a natural transi-

tion, had the daring insolence to enter the senate-house, and to share in the public deliberations, while he singles out every one of us with his eyes, and defines us to slaughter."

tion,

tion to touch upon his own dangerous situation, the description of which is wrought up with the highest art, as it recalls at once to the remembrance of his hearers, the various labours and hazards he had undergone for the sake of his country, in the part he had acted in the detection of CARRIAGE'S conspiracy.

*Ego sum ille Consul, Patres conscripti, cui non  
forum in quo omnis aequitas continetur: non cam-  
pus, consularibus auspiciis consecratus: non curia,  
-to summius auxilium omnium gentium non domus,  
commune perfugium: non lectus, ad quietem da-  
tus: non denique hæc sedes honoris, sella curu-  
lis, unquam vacua mortis periculo atque iniuriis  
fuit.*

"I, conscript Fathers, am that Consul, to whom  
not the forum in which justice is distributed; not the  
-sacred field consecrated by consular auspices; not the  
Senate, the chief aid of all nations; not the house,  
every one's common refuge; not the bed, designed for  
repose; not, finally, this seat of honour, this curule  
-chair, have ever afforded security from the dangers and  
the terrors of death."

The



The Orator then proceeds to enumerate the services he had done to the commonwealth in the investigation of the above-mentioned conspiracy, as well as to point out the risk with which they were performed; a relation, that great as those services were, would, it must be confessed, have come better from another mouth. One is indeed sorry to find the vanity of CICERO, which was his distinguishing foible, displayed in so glaring a manner in this, as well as in several other instances; but let candour draw the veil over his foibles, in consideration of his eloquence and merit.

It would be a material omission, while we are producing specimens of CICERO's oratorical talents, to overlook his celebrated oration for his friend MILO, accused as the author of the death of CLODIUS; an oration in which TULLY hath exhibited an astonishing display both of his reasoning and pathetic talents, and in which he hath united  
Imagination,

Imagination, judgment and Art, in the highest degree. After having proved by an accurate and distinct detail of circumstances, urged with great force of argument, that MILO could have no design upon the life of CLODIUS, but that, on the contrary, the latter had conspired against the life of MILO, in the attempt to execute which intention he was himself slain; the Orator breaks out into a sublime apostrophe, addressed to the altars and groves which CLODIUS had polluted by his impurities, imputing the original cause of his death to their just vengeance, and that of the Gods whose rites he had violated †.

It

† "Vos enim jam Albani luci atque tumuli, vos  
 "inquam imploro atque testor, vosque Albanorum  
 "abruptæ aræ, sacrorum populi Romani sociæ & aqua-  
 "les, quas ille præceps amentia, cassis, prostratisque  
 "sanctissimis lucis, substructionum insanis molibus  
 "oppresserat: vestrae tum aræ, vestrae religiones vi-  
 "guerunt, vestra vis valuit, quam ille omni sectate  
 "polluerat: tuque ex tuo edito monte, Latialis sancte  
 "Jupiter, cujus ille lacus, nemora, finesque sæpe omni  
 "nefario

It is the privilege of Eloquence, as well as Poetry, to employ those figures which

give

nefario stupro & scelere macularat, aliquando ad eum puniendum oculos aperuistis : vobis illas, vobis vestro in conspectu ferre, sed justæ tamen, & debite poenæ solutæ sunt."

Ye hills and groves of *Alba*, and you *Alban* altars, memorials of the *Roman* rites, and coeval with the *Roman* name, sacred groves and altars, raised by his desperate madness, and on the ruins of which he reared those impious piles ; you *Limpore*, and call to witness his guilt. Your rites polluted by his crimes, your worship profaned, your authority insulted, have at last displayed their vengeance, and thou, divine *Lutian* *Jove*, whose lakes, woods and boundaries, he had so often defiled with his detestable impurities, didst at last open thy eyes, and look down from thy high and holy hill to punish this profligate wretch ; to you his blood was due, and in your sight the long delayed vengeance was at last inflicted !"

The learned Reader will observe, that the Author hath taken considerable liberty in the translation of the above passage. As the principal thing to be regarded in every version is to translate the sense, and, if possible, transfuse the spirit of an Author from one language into another, which, considering the different idioms of languages, is impossible to execute, by rendering



give life, motion, and sense to inanimate matter. Such figures, when judiciously introduced and properly supported, give inexpressible dignity, vivacity, and energy to rhetorical composition; as they always indicate 'not only Originality, but likewise great Sublimity and Strength of GENIUS. Every Reader must perceive the difference betwixt saying that CLODIUS was slain by the just vengeance of the Gods for his profanation of their groves and altars, and a solemn address to those hills, groves, and altars, as well as the Deities who presided over them, by a striking prosopœia, as if they were real persons, calling them to witness his guilt, and imputing his death to their resentment; upon

dering word for word; he found himself obliged, in order to do some kind of justice to the original, to admit some transpositions and circumlocutions, which, though they have occasioned an alteration in the order and arrangement of the periods, have however enabled him, as he conceives, less imperfectly to exhibit the sense.

account

## ON GENIUS. 223

account of their violated rites. In the first case we are unmoved, in the last we are transported with astonishment at the novelty, vivacity, and grandeur of the representation.

We shall subjoin two short passages, taken from the end of this Oration, as specimens of CICERO's talents in moving the passions of his hearers, a qualification the most essential of all others in an Orator. One may perceive him gradually warming towards the conclusion of his discourse, till he works himself up to the highest fervour and energy of passion. We can scarce conceive an address more animated and persuasive, or more happily adapted to rouse the affections of the Soldiers, who guarded the Assembly, than the following \*

The

\* " Vos, vos appello, fortissimi viri, qui multum  
 " pro republica sanguinem effudistis: vos in viri & in  
 Q " civis

The Orator concludes his discourse with  
a panegyric on the virtues of Milo, lament-  
ing the loss of his country from his banishment.

“civis invicti appello periculo, centuriones, vosque  
“ milites: vobis non modo inspectantibus, sed etiam  
“ armatis & huic judicio præsentibus, hæc tanta  
“ virtus ex hac urbe expelletur? exterminabitur? pro-  
“ jicietur? O me miserum! O infelicem! ætate  
“ tu me in patriam, Milo, potuisti per hunc: ego te in  
“ patria per eodem retinere non potero? Quid re-  
“ spondebo liberis meis, qui te parentem alterum pu-  
“ tant? Quid tibi, O Frater, qui nunc abes, consorti  
“ mecum temporum illorum? me non potuisse Milo-  
“ nis salutem tuam per eodem, per quos nostram ille  
“ servasset?”

“ You, you bravest of men, I call, who have shed  
so much of your blood for the commonwealth. You  
centurions, and you soldiers I invoke, while the fate  
of an unconquered man and citizen is in suspense,  
Shall so much virtue be banished, exterminated, cast  
out from this city, while you are not only spectators  
of this trial, but the armed guardians of it? Unhappy  
and miserable that I am! Could you, Milo, recal me  
from banishment into my native country by means of  
these men? and shall not I be able to preserve you in  
your country by their means? What shall I say to my  
children, who regard you as another parent? what to  
that, my absent brother Quintus, who didst partici-  
pate



senting at the same time, in a very animated manner, both the loss and disgrace which would redound to his country from his banishment †.

These

pate with me in the dangers of those unhappy times? that I could not insure the safety of Miro by the same persons by whom he secured ours?"

Hicne vir patriæ natus, ulquam nisi in patria morietur? aut, si forte, pro patria? Hujus vos animi monumenta retinebitis: corporis in Italia nullum sepulchrum esse patiemini? hunc sua quisquam sententia ex hac urbe expellet, quem omnes urbes expulsum, a vobis ad se vocabant? O terram illam beatam, quæ hunc virum exciperit! hanc ingratam, si ejecerit; miseram, si amiserit! Sed finis sit. Neque enim præ lacrymis jam loqui possum: & hic se lacrymis defendi vetat.

Shall this man, born for his country, die any where but in his country? or, if the Gods order it so, for his country? Will you retain the monuments of his genius, and allow no sepulchre to his body in Italy? Shall any one by his vote banish a man from this city, whom, once banished, all other cities will invite to reside in them? O happy land, which shall receive this excellent person; ungrateful that shall ba-

These quotations from the Orations of DEMOSTHENES and CICERO, though they cannot give us a proper idea of the astonishing eloquence of those celebrated Orators, which it is impossible to exhibit by a few unconnected extracts, will however serve to shew the power of original Genius in Eloquence, the chief purpose for which they were produced; and that this rare talent, wherever it is found, will always discover itself, as we have already seen, in employing the most sublime, the most splendid, and the most striking figures in composition, as well as in inventing the most surprising, and at the same time the most proper topics of persuasion on every subject, which it will display in all their force, and urge with irresistible efficacy.

nish him! miserable that shall lose him! But I conclude. Nor will my tears allow me to proceed; and the person in whose cause I speak, conscious as he is of his own innocence, disdains the aid and importunity of tears.

It is impossible to avoid observing on this subject, that there is no art in which the Moderns come so far short of the Ancients as in that of Eloquence. We must not however omit to take some notice of modern Eloquence; and here it would be inexcusable intirely to pass over the *French* Orators, who, though it cannot be pretended that they have equaled the illustrious Ancients above-mentioned, have however discovered a high degree of rhetorical Genius. We shall lay before the Reader a few extracts from the Sermons of BOURDALOUE and MASSILLON, passing over at present BOSSUET and SAURIN, whom we shall have occasion to take some notice of in another part of this Essay.

BOURDALOUE, describing the future punishment of the wicked, of which he represents their banishment from the immediate presence of the Deity as an essential part, inquires what is implied in the idea of such a separation. The Reader will observe that



his reasoning upon this point is spirited and  
 emphatical. "Car qu' est ce qu' d' estre  
 "séparé de Dieu? Ah! Chrétiens, quelle  
 "parole! la comprenez vous? Separé de  
 "Dieu, c'est a dire, privé absolument de  
 "Dieu. Separé de Dieu, c'est a dire, con-  
 "damné à n'avoir plus de Dieu, si ce n'est  
 "un Dieu ennemi, un Dieu vengeur. Se-  
 "paré de Dieu, c'est a dire, dechu de tout  
 "droit à l'éternelle possession du premier de  
 "tous les etres, du Souverain etre qui est  
 "Dieu \*." After having insisted on the  
 certainty of the future punishment of the  
 wicked, the Preacher, astonished at the in-  
 difference of mankind to this great truth,  
 exclaims, "Est ce stupidité? est ce inad-  
 "vertence? est ce fureur? est ce enchan-  
 "tement? Crayons nous ce point fondamen-  
 "tal du Christianisme; ne le croyons nous  
 "pas? si nous le croyons? Ou est notre  
 "sagesse? si nous ne le croyons pas, ou est

"notre religion. Je dis plus, si nous ne  
 "le croyons pas, que croyons-nous donc?  
 "puisque'il n'est rien de plus croyable, rien  
 "de plus formellement revelé par la parole  
 "divine, rien de plus solidement fondé dans  
 "la raison humaine, rien dont la créance  
 "soit plus nécessaire pour le tenir les hom-  
 "mes dans le devoir, rien sur quoi le doute  
 "leur soit plus pernicieux, puisque'il les  
 "porte à tous les désordres."

MASSILLON; whom we may justly re-  
 gard as the Prince of modern Orators; dis-  
 plays great power over the passions in many  
 of his Sermons; particularly in that "on  
 the Death of a Sinner," where he rises to  
 an uncommon pitch of Eloquence. His  
 description of this unhappy man in the last  
 agony of nature is equally picturesque and  
 affecting: "Alors le pecheur mourant ne  
 "trouvant plus dans le souvenir du passé

---

† Vol. V. Sermon 2. V.

" que des regrets que l'accablent ; dans tout  
 " que ce passé a ses yeux, que des images  
 " qui l'affligent ; dans la pensée de l'avenir  
 " que des horreurs qui l'épouvantent : ne  
 " sachant plus à qui avoir recours ; ni  
 " aux créatures, qui lui échappent ; ni au  
 " monde, qui s'évanouit ; ni aux hommes,  
 " qui ne sauroient le délivrer de la mort ;  
 " ni au Dieu juste, qu'il regarde comme  
 " un ennemi déclaré, dont il ne doit plus  
 " attendre d'indulgence : il se roule dans  
 " ses propres horreurs ; il se tourmente, il  
 " s'agite pour faire la mort qui le saisit, ou  
 " du moins pour se fuir lui-même : il sort  
 " de ses yeux mourans, je ne sai quoi de  
 " sombre & de farouche, qui exprime les  
 " fureurs de son âme : il pousse du fond  
 " de sa tristesse des paroles entrecoupées de  
 " sanglots, qu'on n'entend qu'à demi ; &  
 " qu'on ne sai si c'est le desespoir ou le re-  
 " pentir qui les a formées ; il jette sur un  
 " Dieu crucifié des regards affreux, & qui  
 " laissent douter si c'est la crainte, ou l'espe-  
 " rance, la haine ou l'amour qu'ils expri-  
 " ment ;



"soudain il entre dans des saisissements, ou  
 "l'on ignore si c'est le corps qui se dissout  
 "ou l'ame qui sent l'approche de son Juge :  
 "il s'opire profondément & l'on ne sait si  
 "c'est le souvenir de ses crimes, qui lui ar-  
 "rache ses soupirs ou le desespoir de quitter  
 "la vie. Enfin, au milieu de ses tristes  
 "efforts, les yeux se fixent, les traits  
 "changent, son visage se défigure ; sa  
 "bouche livide s'entre ouvre d'elle même :  
 "tout son esprit fremit ; & par ce dernier  
 "effort son ame infortunie s'arrache comme  
 "a regret de ce corps de bouc, tombe entre  
 "les mains de Dieu, & se trouve seule aux  
 "pieds du tribunal redoutable †." In the  
 same Sermon, taking a view of the death  
 of a good man, by way of contrast, we  
 meet with the following eloquent exclama-  
 tion : "Grand Dieu ! que de lumiere !  
 "que de paix ! que de transports heureux !  
 "que de saints mouvements d'amour ! de

"Vierge, de confiance, d'actions de grâces;  
 "se passent alors dans cette âme fidèle, sa  
 "foi si renouvelée, son amour se s'enflam-  
 "me, sa ferveur s'exalte, sa componction  
 "se réveille."

It is very astonishing, that while our  
 own country can claim the honour of hav-  
 ing given birth to several eminent Poets,  
 and many great Philosophers, it should  
 not have given birth to one accomplish-  
 ed Orator; and that, while it can boast  
 of having produced an equal to HOMER in  
 the person of MILTON, it should never once  
 have produced, either in the eloquence of  
 the Pulpit or the Bar, a rival to DEMOST-  
 HENES or CICERO! Indeed, when we con-  
 sider the great variety of qualifications, both  
 natural and acquired, necessary to constitute  
 a complete Orator, we cannot expect they  
 should often be united in one person; though  
 that this union should never have happened  
 in any one instance in modern times, must  
 be confessed to be really wonderful. What

is

is still more surprising, is, that in the vast multitude of Sermons, which this age and the last hath produced, many of which abound with solid reasonings, as some are distinguished by the elegance of their style, we have seen very few attempts at genuine Eloquence. The Author however takes a particular pleasure in observing, that in some Sermons lately published, there are to be found several distinguished specimens of true oratorical Genius; and he makes no doubt that he shall oblige most of his Readers, by giving a few short extracts from them.

In a Sermon delivered before his Majesty's Commissioner to the Church of Scotland, in May 1760, by Dr Fordyce, and published at Edinburgh, the Preacher, after having shewn in a very eloquent manner the folly and infamy of unlawful pleasure, proceeds to take a view of the misery attending it; in doing which he paints the voluptuary in a very alarming situation, in the immediate



that prospect of his dissolution. Let the  
 candid Reader judge whether the following  
 passage does not exhibit a very striking pic-  
 ture of the state of an abandoned Libertine  
 in that awful crisis: "O the shuddering,  
 the strong reluctance, the unimaginable  
 convulsions that seize his nature, as he  
 stands lingering on the tremendous preci-  
 pice! He wishes for annihilation, which  
 he often tried to believe in, but could  
 never seriously be convinced of. The  
 dreadful alternative intirely misgives him.  
 He meditates the devouring abyss of eter-  
 nity: he recoils as he eyes it." There is  
 a particular propriety in the short sentences  
 which conclude this passage, and they are  
 as strongly expressive of the situation they  
 are intended to describe, as any I ever re-  
 member to have read. After finishing the  
 description in a few more sentences, the  
 Author very naturally and very emphatically  
 asks, "Is this the man that laughed the  
 children of wisdom and temperance to  
 scorn? Is he of the same opinion, think  
 ye,

“ye, at the last.” Then follows a reflection as pathetic in itself as the language is beautiful in which it is expressed: “Ah, how different his sentiments and language in the bower of pleasure, and on the bed of death!” The Reader will find several other strokes of true Eloquence in this Sermon, as well as in the other occasional Discourses published by the same Author.

There is a passage much to our purpose in a small collection of Sermons, lately published by Dr OGBURN, who, though he has dedicated his Genius principally to Poetry, in which he has acquired a high and just reputation, possesses at the same time, in an uncommon degree, the essential qualifications of the Orator. In one of the Sermons above referred to, we meet with the following bold and sublime apostrophe: “O ye immortal spirits! who are at this moment exulting in the regions of felicity, with what superior indifference do you look down on the little cares, the absurd presumption,

"supposition, the inconsistent characters of  
 mankind. You who can trace the secret,  
 the imperceptible steps, by which Provi-  
 dence hath conducted you to your eternal  
 inheritance, must sometimes look with  
 an eye of pity on your surviving friends,  
 dancing the same tiresome round of giddy  
 pleasure, and preposterously ascribing to  
 themselves those actions, to which you see  
 them gradually conducted by a superior  
 hand!" This abrupt and sublime address  
 is a noble effort of elevated Genius.

"The English Preachers are, it is certain,  
 more distinguished by their justness of  
 sentiment, and strength of reasoning,  
 than by their oratorical powers, or ta-  
 lents of affecting the passions. More  
 solicitous to convince than persuade, they  
 choose to employ their abilities in endea-  
 vouring to impress the mind with a sense of  
 the truths they deliver by the force of argu-  
 mentation, instead of rousing the affections  
 by the energy of their Eloquence. But  
 though



Though we meet with no examples in their writings of those strokes of passion which ~~move~~ <sup>move</sup> ~~trite~~ <sup>trite</sup> and ~~above~~ <sup>above</sup> the heart at once, or of that rapid overpowering Eloquence, which carries every thing before it like a torrent; yet there may be found in their Sermons many instances of the most shining and delicate beauties of Rhetoric, such as indicate great FERTILITY, though not equal force of Imagination. Upon account of these beauties, SEED and ATTARBURY claim a particular preeminence. A BIGNITY of SENTIMENT, a SMOOTHNESS, and EASY ELEGANCE of DICTION, are remarkably conspicuous in the Works of both; and the Sermons of the former are adorned with the richest variety of beautiful and well-adapted imagery, that I have ever met with in a prose writer. He excels peculiarly in the application of the metaphor. Let the following passage stand as an example of his dexterity in varying and appropriating this pleasing figure. Speaking of the advantages of a life uniformly good, he adds, "How

" would

" would this SETTLE the FERMENT of our  
 " youthful passions, and SWEETEN the last  
 " DREGS of our advanced age! how would  
 " this make our lives yield the CALMEST sa-  
 " tisfaction, as some flowers shed the most  
 " FRAGRANT ODOURS just at the close of the  
 " day! And perhaps there is no better way  
 " to prevent a DEADNESS and FLATNESS of  
 " spirit from succeeding, when the BRISKNESS  
 " of our passions goes off, than to acquire  
 " an early taste for those spiritual delights,  
 " whose LEAF withers not, and whose ver-  
 " dure remains in the winter of our days †."

Having shewn the insufficiency of the mere  
 light of nature to clear up our doubts, or re-  
 move our fears, arising from the apprehen-  
 sion of future punishment for those crimes  
 of which we are conscious, he concludes  
 with an observation, in which, by personify-  
 ing Reason, he rises to a considerable degree  
 of Eloquence: " Here then Reason was at  
 " the end of its line; it stood upon the shore,

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† Vol. I. page 296.

"they the vast ocean of Eternity which lay  
 "before it, saw a little, imagined a great  
 "deal; but clouds and darkness soon ter-  
 "minated its narrow prospect \*." To these  
 we shall only add one other passage from  
 the Sermon in which we found the preced-  
 ing, as it will shew what additional grace  
 the most noble sentiments may derive from  
 a series of imagery equally apposite and beau-  
 tiful. "Carry thy eye upwards to that  
 "blessed place, where thy nature shall be as  
 "it were cast anew, purified from all drossy  
 "mixtures and coarse alloys of human  
 "frailty, but brightened and refined as to  
 "the sterling lustre and genuine excellen-  
 "cies of the soul. Here is one continued  
 "repetition of the same unsatisfactory ob-  
 "jects, and there is nothing new under the  
 "sun; but there, far perhaps above the  
 "sun, new scenes, new beings, new won-  
 "ders, new joys will present themselves to

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\* Vol. I. page 321.



As our enlarged view. Look then upon this  
 As world as one wide ocean, where many are  
 As shipwrecked and irrecoverably lost, more  
 As are tossed and fluctuating, but none can  
 As secure to themselves for any considerable  
 As time a future undisturbed calm. The ship  
 As however it still under sail, and whether  
 As the weather be fair or foul, ever at every  
 As minute making near approaches to, and  
 As must shortly reach the shore; and may it  
 As be the haven where we would be.

The Bishop of Rochester in describing the  
 happiness of an acquaintance with God;  
 sums up the whole with the following beau-  
 tiful and soothing reflection; which is well  
 calculated to inspire that serenity of mind;  
 which flows from the acquaintance here  
 commends. "O! the sweet contentment;  
 " the tranquillity, and profound rest of  
 " mind that he enjoys who is a friend of  
 " God, and to whom God therefore is a

† Vol. I. page 345.

TO  
 THE

R

" friend ;

friend; who hath gotten loose from all  
 meaner pursuits, and is regardless of all  
 lower advantages that interfere with his  
 desire of knowing and loving God; and of  
 being known and beloved by him, who  
 lives as in his sight always; looks up to  
 him in every step of his conduct; imitates  
 him to the best of his power; believes him  
 without doubt, and obeys him without re-  
 serve." &c. In his Sermon on the anni-  
 versary of the Martyrdom of King CHARLES  
 the First, he conveys to us a lively idea of  
 the sufferings of that unhappy Prince, by a  
 sublime metaphor: "The passage through  
 this Red-sea was bloody, but short; a di-  
 vine Hand strengthened him in it, and  
 conducted him through it; and he soon  
 reached the shore of bliss and immorta-  
 lity."

\* ATTERBURY'S Sermons, vol. II, p. 198.

† *Ibid.* vol. IV, p. 13.

but To the examples above produced, I take the liberty to subjoin one other passage of a different kind; but which, by every real judge, will be acknowledged to deserve a distinguished regard, since it is animated with all the boldness and enthusiasm of the Orator and the Patriot. The passage I have in my eye, is said to have been part of a speech delivered in the *British* Senate, by a late great Commoner, upon a very popular occasion; and that it is conceived in an high stile of Eloquence, I will venture to affirm. "I never feared any man, nor paid court to any set of men. I have worshipped the Goddess of Liberty alone, ever since I drew my breath. I hope to do so in a land of liberty while that breath remains. And when the spirit shall have forsaken this crazy tabernacle, yet I pray my Guardian Angel to throw my ashes on that spot of the globe where Freedom reigns." What the effect of this part of the speech was in the *British* Senate, I have not heard; but I am well persuaded that it would have been applauded in the *Roman* Forum,



Forum, or by an *Athenian* Assembly; and though perhaps it is of too elevated a kind to suit the cold and correct Genius of a modern Critic, it would have afforded a subject of Panegyric to LONGINUS or QUINTILIAN.

It is not our present business to inquire into the causes of our deficiency in Oratory, as we intend, in a following section, to hazard some reflections on the subject. In the mean time we may observe in general that most of our modern pretenders to Eloquence seem to have considered mankind in the same light in which VOLTAIRE regarded the celebrated DR. CLARKE, as mere reasoning machines; they seem to have considered them as purely intellectual, void of passion and sensibility. This strange mistake may perhaps be supposed to be partly the effect of the philosophical spirit of the times, which, like all other prevailing modes, is subject to its deliriums; certain however it is, that while man remains a compound being, con-

fighting of reason and passion, his actions will always be prompted by the latter, in whatever degree. His opinions may be influenced by the former. So long however as men continue ignorant of the nature, and indifferent to the study of Eloquence, there is little reason to hope for the display of Originality of Genius in this noble art. Nevertheless if we consider its nature, its extent, and the improvements of which it is susceptible, we shall have abundant reason to conclude, that this talent may still be displayed to the utmost advantage, as doubtless it will be in every age, when circumstances concur to favour its exertion. There are innumerable avenues to the human heart, innumerable methods of captivating the affections, of rousing the passions, and influencing the will; and powerful as was the eloquence of DEMOSTHENES and CICERO, those great Orators, with all their admirable invention, have not exhausted all the treasures of their art. It will indeed be extremely difficult to invent means of raising and allaying, of soothing and

and irritating, of agitating and inflaming the passions of mankind, different from what have been practised by those immortal Orators above-mentioned; and perhaps it will be still more difficult to improve the means which they have invented and so successfully used. To accomplish these purposes however is certainly not impossible \*, and therefore ought not to be despaired of.

Let us in the next place observe the efforts of ORIGINAL GENIUS in Music †.

The

\* “Sed cur deficiat animus? Natura enim perfectum  
“Oratorem esse non prohibet: turpiterque desperatur  
“quicquid fieri potest.” QUINTIL. *Instit.* lib. i.

cap. 10.

† Music appears to have been in great esteem among the ancients. QUINTILIAN in particular bestows the highest encomiums on this divine art; and tells us, that it was cultivated by the greatest and wisest men of antiquity;

It will indeed be extremely difficult to invent  
means of raising and allaying of soothing  
Nam

MOIT



The talents of a PERFORMER, and a MASTER and COMPOSER of Music, are very different. To constitute the first, a nice musical ear, and a dexterity of performance acquired by habit, are the sole requisites. To constitute the last, not only a nice musical ear, but an exquisite sensibility of passion, together with a peculiar CONFORMA-

tion of the organs of the voice to express the

passions, are necessary. To describe

"Nam quis ignorat Musicen (ut de hac primum

or loquar) tantum jam illis antiquis temporibus non

studii modo, verum etiam venerationis habuisse, aut

"iidem & Musici & vates, & sapientes judicarentur?

"Mittam alios: Orpheus & Linus; quorum utrum-

que Dis genitum, alterum vero quod rudes quoque

"agreste agrestes animos admiratione mulcerat, non

"feras modo, sed saxa etiam sylvasque duxisse, poste-

"ritatis memoriae traditum est. Et testes Timagenes

"auctor est, omnium in literis studiorum antiquissi-

"mam Musicen existisse; & testimonio sunt clarissimi

"Poetae, apud quos inter regalia convivia laudes He-

"roum ac Deorum ad citharas canebantur." *Instit.*

lib. i. cap. 10.

The same Author justly observes, in another part of

his excellent Work, that the pleasure which we derive

from Music is founded in nature: "Natura docuit,

"ad modos." *Lib. ix. cap. 4.*

tion of Genius to this particular art, are indispensably necessary. Though all the liberal Arts are indebted to Imagination in common, a talent for each of them respectively depends upon the peculiar modification and ADAPTATION of this faculty to the several RESPECTIVE ARTS. Thus the Poet, having by the force of Imagination formed lively images of the objects he proposes to describe, thinks only of expressing his ideas in smooth and harmonious numbers; the Painter, having the same vivid conception of every object, is wholly intent on exhibiting a representation of them in colours, as if he had no other method of conveying his ideas; and the Musician, having his head filled with crotchets and concords, airs and sonatas, employs his Imagination intirely in combining a variety of sounds, and trying their power, in order to constitute harmony. A musical Genius naturally exerts itself in exercises of this kind, and is indicated by them. In this art likewise it must be confessed, that considerable scope is afforded for the exertions

tion, even of ORIGINAL GENIUS. Every  
 masterly Composer of Music must feel, in  
 the most intense and exquisite degree, the  
 various emotions, which, by his compositions,  
 he attempts to excite in the minds of others.  
 Even before he begins to compose a piece of  
 music, he must work himself up to that  
 transport of passion, which he desires to ex-  
 press and to communicate in his piece. In  
 effectuating this purpose, Imagination ope-  
 rates very powerfully, by awakening in his  
 own mind those particular affections, that  
 are correspondent to the airs he is meditat-  
 ing; and by raising each of these to that tone  
 of sensibility, and that fervor of passion,  
 which is most favourable to composition.  
 This fervor and enthusiasm of passion, may  
 be termed the Inspiration of Music; and is  
 the principal quality which gives it such an  
 irresistible empire over the human heart.  
 The maxim of HORACE,

*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi.*

Would you have me participate your pain?

First teach yourself to feel the woes you feign.

Non tam

is



is a rule as necessary to be observed by a Composer of Music, in those strains which are intended to excite sympathy and grief, as by a Tragic Poet, who would excite the same emotions.

We may farther observe, that as an arbitrary combination of sounds can never produce the harmony, much less the expression of Music, any more than a random assemblage of words can make an elegant and connected poem or oration; so Imagination, under the direction of a tuneful ear, must assist the musical Artist in adopting and combining those sounds only, which may affect the passions in the manner he intends.

It must be granted indeed, that the efforts of Imagination discovered in Music, though not inconsiderable, are by no means so extraordinary as in any of the Arts above-mentioned. The exercise of this quality seems in Music to be somewhat confined, being necessarily subjected to, and under the direction

direction of the ear, by which it is assisted; whereas in Poetry and Eloquence, it is absolute and unbounded, as every idea of the mind may be described; and in Painting, it is very little restrained, since most of them may be delineated.

After all, when we consider how many ways there are of affecting the human heart by the power of sounds; how the affections may be melted into tenderness, or kindled into transport; how the passions may be raised and allayed, agitated and inflamed; how they may be elevated to the highest pitch of sublimity, fired with heroic ardor, or lulled in the voluptuous languor of effeminate luxury; we may be sufficiently convinced, that there remains an extensive field yet unoccupied for the display of ORIGINALITY OF GENIUS, in the noble art of which we are treating. It is much to be regretted, that our modern Masters in this art have in general endeavoured to render their compositions pleasing to the ear, rather than affecting

fecting to the heart; that they have studied the soft and delicate graces, rather than the sublime and animated expression of Music; and that by attempting to heighten its melody, they have in a great measure deprived it of the energy and eloquence of passion, and thereby rendered musical concerts rather a delicious gratification, than an useful and exalted entertainment.

We shall consider lastly, how far ORIGINARINESS of GENIUS may be discovered in ARCHITECTURE.

It must be confessed, that no improvements have been made in this art by our modern Architects, whose greatest ambition and excellence it hath been, to understand and to copy those venerable remains of ancient Architecture, which have escaped the rage of Barbarians, or withstood the ravages of time. Those august monuments of antiquity, which have been the wonder and admiration of ages, have been considered,



ed by the most ingenious artists themselves as complete Models of Architecture, from which nothing can be taken, and to which nothing can be added, and are in fact such as few of them have ever equaled, and none of them (whether through want of ability, or want of ambition) have ever excelled. Great veneration is unquestionably due to ancient Genius. The Ancients have indeed been our Masters in the liberal Arts; and their productions deserve our highest commendations: yet let us not shew them a blind and superstitious reverence. Absolute perfection is incompatible with the works of man, and while we regard the works of the Ancients as so perfect, that we despair of excelling them, the consequence will be, that we shall never be able to equal them: the original will always be preferable to the copy. We have already annotated on this too servile deference to antiquity \*; and shall only here remark,

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Book II. Section II.

that

that this disposition is highly unfavourable to the improvement of any of the Arts; and that a confident timidity will always prove a greater discouragement, as well as obstruction to Originality of Genius, than presumptuous temerity. The one, in aspiring beyond its sphere, may indeed tumble from its towering height; but the other, cautious and fearful, will scarce ever rise from the ground. Where few attempts therefore are made to excel, original Genius cannot be much displayed: it is nevertheless certain, that great scope is afforded for the display of it in the Art we are speaking of, in which an unrestrained exercise is allowed to the faculty of Imagination, because the forms of elegance and gracefulness, of beauty and grandeur, which it is its province to invent, are innumerable. Where this faculty is restricted, and the ambition and exertion of Artists are confined to the imitation of certain Models in some of others, there it cannot

not operate in any considerable degree: for IMITATION will ever be found a bar to ORIGINALITY. A pretty extensive Imagination, we confess, may be exerted in assembling together the detached parts of one great design; and when these are united together in the construction of an edifice of consummate symmetry and beauty, we allow the building to be an illustrious monument of the Genius and Taste of the Artist who designed it: but where the whole is only ingeniously collected, and no part invented, a claim to ORIGINALITY of Genius can by no means be admitted in his favour.

A Genius for Architecture truly ORIGINAL, will, by the native force and plastic power of Imagination, strike out for itself new and surprising Models in this Art; and, by its combining faculty, will select out of the infinite variety of ideal forms that float in the mind, those of the Grand and Beautiful, which it will unite in one consummate as well as uncommon design. We have



have already observed, that every original Genius, whether in Architecture or in any other of the liberal Arts, is peculiarly distinguished by a powerful bias to invention. It was this bias which we may call the instinctive, insuppressible Impulse of Genius, whose spontaneous efforts designed those stupendous Gothic structures, that appear so magnificent in their ruins. The Architects, who first planned those edifices, though unacquainted with the polite Arts, or with the *Grecian* and *Roman* Architecture, were doubtless great Originals in their profession, since they planned them by the unaided strength of their own Genius. Their untutored imaginations prompted them to aspire to the Solemn, the Vast, and the Wonderful, and allowing an unbounded scope to the exercise of this faculty, they were enabled to give to their buildings that awful though irregular grandour, which elevates the mind, and produces the most pleasing astonishment. These Gothic edifices show the inventive power of the human mind in

S

a striking

striking light, and are sufficient to convince us, that excellence in Architecture was not confined to the *Greeks* and *Romans*, but may be sometimes displayed among a people in other respects barbarous.

Though it is impossible to point out the particular tracks which an ORIGINAL GENIUS in Architecture will pursue, in endeavouring to improve the art he professes; as those tracks are so various, and the natural powers of Artists are so different; yet we may remark, that after all the improvements which Architecture received in the age of *PERICLES* and of *AUGUSTUS*, it seems susceptible of one important improvement, from the union of the awful Gothic grandeur with the majestic simplicity and graceful elegance of the *Grecian* and *Roman* edifices; and that by such an union ORIGINALITY of GENIUS in this art might be signally displayed.

We

We shall conclude this section with observing, that though the simplest and earliest periods of Society are favourable to original descriptive Poetry, which we shall immediately endeavour to shew, and Eloquence will always be exerted in its utmost power under a Democratical form of government, during the reign of Liberty and public Spirit, Painting and Architecture will, in general, attain their highest degree of improvement, in the most advanced state of society, under the irradiations of Monarchical splendor, aided by the countenance and encouragement of the great and opulent.

S 2

SECTION

We now consider the period of society most favourable to the progress of Poetry, and particularly in Poetry, we shall



to the display of Originality of  
Genius in the last mentioned art; and this  
period we shall now consider.

## SECTION V.

THAT

ORIGINAL POETIC

GENIUS IS USUALLY

Will in general be displayed in its utmost Vigour

in the infancy of society.

PERIODS OF SOCIETY.

Which are peculiarly favourable to it.

AND THAT

It will seldom appear in a very high Degree in

CULTIVATED LIFE.

Much is to be observed; much is to be dis-

HAVING pointed out the exertions

of ORIGINAL GENIUS in the different

Arts, and particularly in Poetry, we shall

now consider the period of society most fa-

vourable

vourable to the display of ORIGINALITY of GENIUS in the last mentioned art; and this period we affirm to be the earliest and least cultivated.

To assert, that this divine art, to an excellence in which the highest efforts of human Genius are requisite, should attain its utmost perfection in the infancy of society, when mankind are only emerging from a state of ignorance and barbarity, will appear a paradox to some, though it is an unquestionable truth; and a closer attention will convince us, that it is agreeable to reason, as well as confirmed by experience.

While Arts and Sciences are in their first rude and imperfect state, there is great scope afforded for the exertions of Genius. Much is to be observed; much is to be discovered and invented. Imagination however in general exerts itself with more success in the Arts than in the Sciences; in the former of which its success is more rapid than

in the latter. Active as this Faculty is in its operations, its discoveries in Science are for the most part attained by slow and gradual steps. They are the effect of long and severe investigation, and receive their highest improvement in the most civilized state of society. On the other hand the efforts of Imagination, in Poetry at least, are impetuous, and attain their utmost perfection at once, even in the rudest form of social life. This art does not require long and sedulous application, to confer Originality and excellence on its productions: its earliest unlaboured essays generally possess both in the highest degree. The reasons why they do so, will be assigned immediately. In the mean time we may observe, as a circumstance deserving our attention, that this is by no means the case with the other arts, but is peculiar to Poetry alone. Painting, Eloquence, Music and Architecture, attain their highest improvement by the repeated efforts of ingenious Artists, as well as the sciences by the reiterated researches and experiments



periments of Philosophers, though, as we have already observed, Imagination operates with greater rapidity in the improvement of the former, than in that of the latter; but still it operates gradually in the improvement of both. There never arose an eminent Painter, Orator, Musician, Architect or Philosopher, in any age, completely self-taught, without being indebted to his predecessors in the art or science he professed. Should it be objected, that the art of Painting was revived, and brought to the utmost perfection to which it ever arrived in modern times, in one single age, that of Leo the Tenth, we answer, That the *Italian* Masters, though they had none of the ancient paintings to serve them as models, had however some admirable remains both of the *Grecian* and *Roman* statuary, which, by heightening their ideas of excellence in its sister art, and kindling their ambition, contributed greatly to the perfection of their works. Arts and Sciences indeed generally rise and fall together; but, excepting Poetry

alone,

alone, they rise and fall by gusts, though not always by equal degrees: sometimes advancing with quicker progress to the summit of excellence, sometimes declining from it by slower steps, in proportion to the different degrees of Genius, and application with which they are cultivated; considered in connection with those external causes, which promote or obstruct their improvement. It is very remarkable however, that in the earliest and most uncultivated periods of society, Poetry is by one great effort of nature, in one age, and by one individual, brought to the highest perfection to which human Genius is capable of advancing it; not only when the other Arts and Sciences are in a languishing state, but when they do not so much as exist. Thus HOMER wrote his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, when there was not a single picture to be seen in Greece; and OSSIAN composed *Fingals* and *Temora*, when none of the Arts, whether liberal or mechanical, were known in his country. This is a curious phenomenon;

The first reason we shall assign of external Poetic Genius being most remarkably displayed in an early and uncultivated period of society, arises from the antiquity of the period itself, and from the appearance of novelty in the objects which Genius contemplates. A Poet of real Genius, who lives in a distant uncultivated age, possesses great and peculiar advantages for original composition, by the mere antiquity of the period in which he lives. He is perhaps the first Poet who hath arisen in this infant state of society; by which means he enjoys the undivided empire of Imagination without a rival. The mines of Fancy not having been opened before his time, are left to be digged by him; and the treasures they contain become his own, by a right derived from the first discovery. The whole system of nature, and the whole region of fiction, yet unexplored by others, is subjected to his survey,



harvey, from which he culls those rich spoils, which adorn his compositions, and render them original. It may be said indeed, in answer to this, and it is true, That the stores of nature are inexhaustible by human imagination, and that her face is ever various and ever new; but it may be replied, That some of her stores are more readily found than others, being less hid from the eye of Fancy, and some of her features more easily hit, because more strongly marked. The first good Poet therefore, possessing those unrifled treasures, and contemplating these unfulled features, could not fail to present us with a draught so striking, as to deserve the name of a complete ORIGINAL. We may farther observe, that the objects with which he is surrounded, have an appearance of novelty, which, in a more cultivated period, they in a great measure lose; but which, in that we are speaking of, excites an attention, curiosity and surprise, highly favourable to the exertion of Genius, and somewhat resembling that

the which Milton attributes to our first  
 ancestor as soon as he is created, which  
 straight toward Heaven my wondring eyes I turn'd,  
 And gaz'd a while the ample sky.

*Paradise Lost, Book viii. line 257.*

About me round I saw  
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
 And liquid lapse of murmuring streams.

*Line 261.*

Such a person looks round him with won-  
 der; every object is new to him, and has  
 the power to affect him with surprise and  
 pleasure; and as he is not familiarised by  
 previous description to the scenes he con-  
 templates, these strike upon his mind with  
 their full force; and the Imagination asto-  
 nished and enraptured with the survey of  
 the Vast, the Wild, and the Beautiful in  
 nature, conveyed through the medium of  
 sense, spontaneously expresses its vivid ideas  
 in bold and glowing metaphors, in sublime,  
 animated and picturesque description. Even

a Poet

a Poet of ordinary Genius will in such a state of society present us with some original ideas in his compositions; for nature lying open to his view in all its extent and variety, in contemplating this unbounded field, so small a part of which hath been yet occupied by others, he can hardly fail to select some distinguishing objects which have escaped the notice of the vulgar, and which described in Poetry may stamp upon it a degree of ORIGINALITY.

We may add, that the productions of the early ages, when they present to us scenes of nature and a state of life we are little acquainted with, and which are very different from those that now subsist, will to us appear original, though they may not be really such if the true originals are lost, of which the works that yet remain are only copies or imitations. Thus the Comedies of TERENCE are valued, because the Originals of MENANDER, which the Roman Poet imitated, excepting a few fragments,

are



are lost. Could the works of the latter be recovered, those of the former would lose much of their reputation. Thus far the superiority of Poetic Genius in those early ages is accidental, and therefore no way meritorious. It is the effect of a particular situation. It is the consequence of antiquity.

The next reason we shall give, why original Poetic Genius appears in its utmost perfection in the first periods of social life, is the simplicity and uniformity of manners peculiar to such periods.

Manners have a much greater effect on the exertions of Poetic Genius, than is commonly imagined. The simple manners which prevail among most nations in the infancy of society, are peculiarly favourable to such exertions. In this primitive state of nature, when mankind begin to unite in society, the manners, sentiments, and passions are (if we may use the expression) perfectly

perfectly original. They are the dictates of nature, unmix'd and undiguit; they are therefore more easily comprehended and described. The Poet in describing his own feelings, describes also the feelings of others; for in such a state of society, these are similar and uniform in all. Their tastes, dispositions, and manners are thrown into the same mould, and generally formed upon one and the same model. Artless and tender loves, generous friendships, and warlike exploits, compose the history of this uncultivated period; and the Poet who relates these, feeling the inspiration of his subject, is himself animated with all the ardor of the Lover, the Friend, and the Hero. Hence as his sensations are warm and vivid, his sentiments will become passionate or sublime, as the occasion may require; his descriptions energetic; his style bold, elevated, and metaphorical; and the whole, being the effusion of a glowing fancy and an impassioned heart, will be perfectly natural and ORIGINAL. Thus

far

far then an early and uncultivated state of society, in which the manners, sentiments and passions, run in the uniform current above-mentioned (as they do in most infant societies) appears favourable to the display of original Poetic Genius.

A third cause of this quality's being remarkably exerted in an early period of society, is the leisure and tranquillity of uncultivated life, together with the innocent pleasures which generally attend it.

Genius naturally shoots forth in the simplicity and tranquillity of uncultivated life. The undisturbed peace, and the innocent rural pleasures of this primeval state, are, if we may so express it, congenial to its nature. A Poet of true Genius delights to contemplate and describe those primitive scenes, which recal to our remembrance the fabulous era of the golden age. Happily exempted from that tormenting ambition, and those vexatious desires, which trouble

the



the current of modern life, he wanders with a serene, contented heart, through walks and groves consecrated to the Muses; or, indulging a sublime, pensive, and sweetly-foothing melancholy, strays with a slow and solemn step, through the unfrequented desert, along the naked beach, or the bleak and barren heath. In such a situation, every theme is a source of inspiration, whether he describes the beauties of nature, which he surveys with transport; or the peaceful innocence of those happy times, which are so wonderfully soothing and pleasing to the imagination. His descriptions therefore will be perfectly vivid and original, because they are the transcript of his own feelings. Such a situation as that we have above represented, is particularly favourable to a pastoral Poet, and is very similar to that enjoyed by THEOCRITUS, which no doubt had a happy influence on his compositions; and it is a situation highly propitious to the efforts of every species of Poetic Genius.

Perhaps

Perhaps we may be thought to refine too much on this point; and it may be questioned whether such tranquillity and innocence as we have above supposed have ever existed in any state of society. To this we may answer; That though the traditional or even historical accounts of the early ages, are not much to be depended on; yet those ancient original poems which we have in our hands, give us reason to think that a certain innocence of manners, accompanied with that tranquillity which is its consequence, prevailed among those people whom we are not ashamed to call barbarous, in a much higher degree than in more modern and cultivated periods.

The last cause we shall assign why original Poetic Genius appears in its utmost perfection in the uncultivated ages of society, is, its exemption from the rules and restraints of Criticism, and its want of that knowledge which is acquired from books. When we consider learning and critical

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knowledge

knowledge as unfavourable to original Poetry, we hope we shall not be accused of pleading the cause of ignorance, rusticity, and barbarism, any more than when we speak of the happy influence of the simple uncultivated periods of society on the productions of the above-mentioned art, we shall be supposed to prefer those rude and artless ages to a highly civilized state of life. The effects of Literature and Criticism in the improvement of all the sciences and all the arts, excepting Poetry alone, and the advantages of a state of civilization in augmenting and refining the pleasures of social life, are too obvious to require to be pointed out. We are at present only concerned to examine the effects of Learning and critical Knowledge on original Poetry, the want of which we affirm to be one of the principal causes of this art's being carried to its highest perfection in the first uncultivated periods of human society.

Let



Let us inquire into the effects of these, upon the mind of a Poet possessed of a high degree of original Genius. By an acquaintance with that Literature which is derived from books, it will be granted, he may attain the knowledge of a great variety of events, and see human nature in a great variety of forms. By collecting the observations and experience of past ages, by imitating his own, and by reasoning justly from acknowledged principles, he may, no doubt, acquire more accurate and extensive ideas of the works of Nature and Art, and may likewise be thereby qualified to enrich the Sciences with new discoveries, as well as most of the Arts with new inventions and improvements. In his own art only he can never become an Original Author by such means; nor, strictly speaking, so much as acquire the materials, by the use of which he may justly attain this character: for the ideas derived from books, that is, from the ideas of others, can by no process of poetical chymistry confer perfect Originality.

Those ideas which are the intire creation of the mind, or are the result of the Poet's own observations, and immediately drawn from nature, are the only original ones in the proper sense. A Poet, who adopts images, who culls out incidents he has met with in the writings of other Authors, and who imitates characters which have been portrayed by other Poets, or perhaps by Historians, cannot surely with any propriety be considered as an Original, though he may at the same time discover considerable powers of imagination in adapting those images and incidents, as well as transforming and moulding these characters to the general design of his poem. In order to become a Poet perfectly original (of whom only it must be remembered we are here treating) he must, if he should attempt Epic Poetry, invent images, incidents and characters: tradition may indeed supply him with the groundwork of the poem, as it did HOMER, but the superstructure must be altogether his own. In executing such a work, what aid can a truly

truly original Poet receive from books? If he borrows aid from the performances of others, he is no longer a complete Original. To maintain this character throughout, he must rely on his own fund: his own plastic imagination must supply him with every thing.

But such intire Originality very rarely happens, especially in a modern age. Many of the most splendid images of Poetry have been already exhibited, many of the most striking characters in human life have been delineated, and many of the most beautiful objects of nature, and such as are most obvious, have been described by preceding Bards. It will be very difficult therefore for their successors to select objects which the eye of Fancy hath never explored, and none but a Genius uncommonly original can hope to accomplish it.

There are very different degrees of Originality in Poetry; and several eminent Ge-



mules in this art, possessing a very consider-  
 able share of Originality themselves, have  
 however been contented to imitate the great  
 Father of Epic Poetry in ~~our~~ <sup>our</sup> circumstance  
 or another, partly perhaps through a con-  
 sciousness of their being unable to produce  
 anything of a different kind equal to his  
 compositions, partly through a natural ten-  
 dency to imitate the excellencies they admired  
 in a model rendered venerable by the con-  
 stant testimonies of all ages in his favour,  
 and partly through the real difficulty of at-  
 taining complete Originality in the province  
 of the *Epic* after him. Thus Virgil  
 copied many of the episodes and images of  
 the *Adonian* Bard; Tasso imitated some of  
 his characters, as well as adopted a part of  
 his imagery, and even the divine Milton  
 condescended, in a very few instances in-  
 deed, to imitate this Prince of ancient Poets,  
 in cases where his own Genius left to its  
 native energy, and uninfluenced by an ac-  
 quaintance with the Writings of Homer,  
 would have enabled him to equal the *Greek*  
 Poet.

Poet. An instance of this kind occurs in the end of the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, where MILTON informs us that Satan, while he was preparing for a dreadful combat with his antagonist, fled away, upon observing that one of the scales which were suspended from Heaven, kicked the beam, thereby presaging to him an unfortunate issue of the encounter. By this cool expedient, which was suggested by that passage of HOMER, in which JUPITER is supposed to weigh the fates of HECTOR and ACHILLES in his golden balance, MILTON has prevented the consequences of this horrid fray, sacrificed a real excellence to a frivolous imitation, and very much disappointed the eager expectations of the Reader. The Poet's own Genius, had he been unacquainted with the *Iliad*, would naturally have led him to describe these mighty combatants engaged in dreadful fight; but a propensity to the imitation of so eminent an Author, repressed the native ardor of his own imagination. This single instance is sufficient to shew us the

effect of Literature on the mind of a Poet of original Genius, whose exertions it probably will in some instances suppress, but cannot in any instance assist. On the other hand, a Poet living in the more early periods of society, having few or no preceding Bards for his models, is in very little hazard of being betrayed into imitation, which in a modern age it is so difficult to avoid; but, giving full scope to the bent of his Genius, he is enabled, if he is possessed of a high degree of this quality, to produce a Work completely original. From this train of reasoning it appears, that the Literature which is acquired from books, especially from the Works of preceding Bards, is unfavourable to Originality in Poetry; and that Poets who live in the first periods of society, who are destitute of the means of learning, and consequently are exempted from the possibility of Imitation, enjoy peculiar advantages for original composition.

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We may add, that another effect of learning is, to ENCUMBER and OVERLOAD the mind of an original Poetic Genius. Indeed it has this effect upon the mind of every man who has not properly arranged its scattered materials, and who by thought and reflection has not "digested into sense the motley meal †." But however properly arranged those materials may be, and however thoroughly digested this intellectual food, an original Genius will sometimes find an inconvenience resulting from it, for as no man can attend to and comprehend many different things at once, his mental faculties will in some cases be necessarily oppressed and overcharged with the immensity of his own conceptions, when weighed down by the additional load of learning. The truth is, a Poet of original Genius has very little occasion for the weak aid of Literature: he is self-taught. He comes into the world as if were completely accomplished. Nature sup-

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† Night Thoughts.

picks the materials of his compositions; his senses are the under-workmen, while Imagination, like a masterly Architect, superintends and directs the whole. Or, to speak more properly, Imagination both supplies the materials, and executes the work, since it calls into being "things that are not," and creates and peoples worlds of its own. It may be easily conceived therefore, that an original Poetic Genius, possessing such innate treasure (if we may be allowed an unphilosophical expression) has no use for that which is derived from books, since he may be encumbered, but cannot be enriched by it; for though the chief merit of ordinary Writers may consist in arranging and presenting us with the thoughts of others, that of an original Writer will always consist in presenting us with such thoughts as are his own.

We observed likewise, that an exemption from the rules and restraints of Criticism, contributed greatly to the more remarkable display of original Poetic Genius in

the insinuations of society. Every species of original Genius delights to range at liberty, and especially original Poetic Genius, which abhors the fetters of Criticism, claims the privilege of the freeborn sons of Nature, and never relinquishes it without the utmost regret. This noble talent knows no law, and acknowledges none in the uncultivated ages of the world, excepting its own spontaneous impulse, which it obeys without control, and without any dread of the censure of Critics. The truth is, Criticism was never formed into a system, till ARISTOTLE, that penetrating and (to use an expression by which VOLTAIRE characterises MR LOCKE) "methodical Genius" arose, who deduced his Poetics, not from his own imagination, but from his accurate observations on the Works of HOMER, SOPHOCLES, ÆSCHYLUS, and EURIPIDES. Let us observe the probable and natural effects which a strict adherence to the rules of Criticism will have on original Genius in Poetry. One obvious effect of it is, that it confines the attention to artificial rules, and



ties the mind down to the observance of them, perhaps at the very time that the imagination is upon the stretch, and grasping at some idea, astonishingly great, which however it is obliged, though with the utmost reluctance, to quit, being intimidated by the apprehension of incurring censure. By this means, the irregular but noble boldness of Fancy is checked, the divine and impetuous ardor of Genius is, we do not say extinguished, but in a great measure suppressed; and many shining excellencies sacrificed to justness of design, and regular uniformity of execution.

The candid Reader will observe, that the question we have been examining is, not whether critical Learning be upon the whole really useful to an Author of Genius, so as to render his Works more perfect and accurate, but what its particular effect will be upon the productions of a Genius truly original. We are far from intending to disregard or censure those rules "for writing well," which have been established by sound judgment, and

and an exact discernment of the various species of composition; an attempt that would be equally weak and vain! On the contrary, we profess a reverence for those laws of writing, which good sense and the corresponding voice of ages have pronounced important; and we consider them as what ought never to be violated; though with respect to others of a more trivial nature, however binding they may be upon ordinary Authors, we can look upon them in no other light, than as the frivolous fetters of original Genius, to which it has submitted through fear, always improperly, and sometimes ridiculously, but which it may boldly shake off at pleasure; at least whenever it finds them suppressing its exertion, or whenever it can reach an uncommon excellence by its emancipation.

Upon the whole, from the reasons above assigned, it seems evident, that the EARLY UNCULTIVATED ages of society are most favourable to the display of original Genius in Poetry; whence it is natural to expect, that

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in such ages the greatest Originals in this  
 art will always arise. Unhappily for us, this  
 point does not admit of proof from an in-  
 duction of many particulars; for very few  
 original Poets of these nations are left, who  
 they might have been expected, have descen-  
 ded through the vicissitudes and revolutions of  
 so many ages to our times. Most of the mo-  
 numents of Genius, as well as the works of  
 Art, have perished in the general wreck of  
 empire; and we can only conjecture the merit  
 of such as are lost from that of the small  
 number of those which remain. While the  
 Works of Homer and Ossian however are  
 in our hands, these, without any other ex-  
 amples, will be sufficient to establish the truth  
 of the first part of our assertion; That in the  
 early periods of society, original Poetic Genius  
 will in general be exerted in its utmost vi-  
 gour. Let us now proceed to shew the truth  
 of the second part of it, which was, That  
 this quality will seldom appear in a very high  
 degree in cultivated life; and let us assign the  
 reasons of it.

which

SHAKESPEAR



SHAKESPEARE is the only modern Author  
(whose taste by the way compared with the  
present are not very modern) whom in point  
of Originality we can venture to compare  
with those eminent ancient Poets above men-  
tioned. In sublimity of Genius indeed Mar-  
ton is inferior to neither of them; but he  
cannot be pretended that he was so complete  
an Original as the one or the other, since he  
was indebted to the sacred Writings for se-  
veral important incidents, and for many fine  
lines of verse to be met with in *Paradise  
Lost*. Not to mention what was formerly  
observed, that in a few passages he imitated  
the great Father of Poetry. With respect to  
SHAKESPEARE therefore, admitting him to be  
a modern Author, he is at any rate but a sin-  
gle exception; though indeed his Genius was  
so strongly irregular, and so different from  
that of every other Mortal, *Quid mirum  
est* *fundum* that no argument can be deduced  
from such an example to invalidate dispo-  
sition, since he would probably have dis-  
covered the same great and eccentric Genius

which

which we so much admire at present, in any age or country whatever. External causes, though they have great influence on common minds, would have had very little on such a one as SHAKESPEAR'S. Let it be confessed, however, in justice to our own age, that if it hath not produced such perfect Originals as those above-mentioned, which perhaps may be partly imputed to the influence of causes peculiar to the present period and state of society, yet it hath produced several elegant, and some exalted Geniuses in Poetry; who are distinguished also by a very considerable degree of Originality, and such as is rarely to be met with in a modern age. The names of YOUNG, GRAY, OGILVIE, COLLINS, AKENSIDE, and MASON, as they do honour to the present age, will probably be transmitted with reputation to posterity. But since it must be universally allowed, that such intire Originality, as we have shewn to be competent to an uncultivated period, hath never yet appeared in modern times, excepting in the single instance above-mentioned,

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it may be worth the while to inquire into the causes why it so seldom appears, or can be expected to appear in cultivated life.

If we have successfully investigated the causes why original Poetic Genius is most remarkably displayed in the uncultivated state of society; we shall probably discover that the chief causes of its being rarely found in the same degree in more civilized ages, are the opposites of the former. Thus the first cause we assigned of this quality's being exerted in a higher degree in the EARLIER periods of social life, was deduced from the ANTIQUITY of those periods, and the SMALL PROGRESS of CULTIVATION in them. One reason therefore why it will so seldom appear in a later period, must be the disadvantage of living so long after the field of Fancy hath been preoccupied by the more ancient Bards. We have already allowed that a truly original Poet will strike out a path for himself; but it must likewise be allowed, that to do so after his illustrious predecessors, will at least



be more difficult. To what hath been above advanced on this head, we shall here only add a single observation, that should any modern Poet with justice claim an equality of merit with the renowned Ancients in point of Originality, he would, considering the disadvantages he must labour under, be intitled to a still superior share of reputation. In the mean time we may reasonably infer, that the difference in the period of society above-mentioned, will always prove unfavourable to the Originality of a modern Poet; and may be considered as one cause why this quality rarely appears in a very high degree in polished life.

We considered the SIMPLICITY and UNIFORMITY of ancient Manners, as another cause why original Genius is exerted in its utmost vigour in the first periods of society.

We may remark, on the other hand, that the DIVERSITY, DISSIPATION, and excessive REFINEMENTS of modern Manners, will naturally prove unfavourable to its exertion,

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in later and more civilized ages. Where there is a great diversity of Manners, it will be difficult to mark and to describe the predominating colours. Where Dissipation prevails, Genius is in danger of being drawn within its vortex; and the false refinements in Luxury and Pleasure, which are characteristic of later ages, though they are consistent enough with, and even productive of the improvement of all the mechanical, and some of the liberal Arts; yet they are unfriendly to the two most sublime of all the liberal Arts, original Poetry and Eloquence. An excess of Luxury is indeed almost as unfavourable to the cultivation of Genius in these, as it is to the cultivation of Virtue. It enfeebles the mind, as it corrupts the heart, and gradually suppresses that strenuous exertion of the mental faculties, by which consummate excellence is to be attained. Poetic Genius in particular cannot flourish either in uninterrupted SUNSHINE, or in continual SHADE. It languishes under the blazing ardor of a summer noon, as its buds are blasted

by the damp fogs and chilling breath of a winter sky. Poverty is far more unfavourable to the display of true Poetic Genius than excessive Affluence is. The former crushes its early and aspiring efforts at once; the latter more slowly, but no less surely, enervates its powers, and dissolves them in Luxury and Pleasure. It was a sensible observation of a French Monarch, though the conjunction be somewhat fantastical, *Poète & equi. Amidi, non saginandi.* The situation most desirable for a Poet is the middle state of life. He ought neither to riot in the fulness of opulence, nor to feel the pinching wants of poverty, but to possess that ease and independence which are necessary to unfold the blossoms of Genius to the utmost advantage. The third cause which we assigned of original Poetic Genius being most remarkably displayed in the uncultivated state of society, which



ciety, was the ~~liberty~~ and ~~tranquillity~~ naturally resulting from such a state. The cause therefore why it seldom appears in a more advanced period, will be just the reverse of the former, namely, the ~~activity~~ and ~~ardor~~, the ~~hurry~~ and ~~rustle~~ observable in modern ages, occasioned by their eager pursuits, and the clashing interests of mankind. As the voice of Conscience is often drowned amidst the clamour of tumultuous passion, so the flame of Genius is frequently smothered by the busy, bustling cares of an active life. The thorny path of Ambition, and the painful, patient pursuit of Gain, are both unfavourable, though not in an equal degree, to its native ardor. The former occasions a distraction, harassment, and anxiety of thought; the latter an intense depression of the powers of Imagination. Genius is misled by the one, perverted by the other. Indeed it scarce ever happens, that a high degree of this quality is allied to Avarice: it seldom stoops to the drudgery of laborious business for the sake of wealth, of which

which it is naturally very little solicitous, and with the ardent desire of which it is in a great measure incompatible. Ambition however has charms capable of seducing it. Honour and Power are objects at which it frequently aspires; and they often prove obstructions to its native exertions in its proper sphere, by engaging the mind in pursuits, which produce embarrassment and perplexity. True Genius, removed from the din and tumult of business and care, shoots up to the noblest height; it spreads forth all its luxuriance in the peaceful vale of rural tranquillity. Its fate in advanced society, and amidst the croud of mankind, is very different. There it meets with many obstacles to check its progress, and to discourage its efforts. Exposed to the assaults of malignity and envy, it falls the victim of unmerited calumny; or, intangled in those vexatious pursuits which interrupt the repose of mankind, its ardor is wasted in the tumultuous career of ambition, and its powers absorbed in the unfathomable gulf of sensual indulgence.

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The last cause we took notice of as favourable to original Poetry in ancient times, while society was yet in its rudest form, was the WANT OF LITERATURE, and an exemption from the RULES of CRITICISM. It will follow therefore by just consequence, that the acquaintance with LITERATURE and CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE, which is so considerably diffused in modern times, must be equally unfavourable to the exertion of original Poetic Genius in those times.

Having considered the effect of these accomplishments upon the mind of an original Poet at great length, in the former part of this section, we shall conclude with a remark, which will exhibit in one view the substance of what hath been more fully discussed in the preceding pages. It is, that though the progress of Literature, Criticism and Civilization, have contributed to unfold the powers and extend the empire of Reason; have taught men to think more justly, as well as to express their sentiments with more precision;



sions; have had the happiest influence on the Arts and Sciences in general (since by communicating the discoveries, inventions, and observations of preceding ages, they have facilitated the way to future inventions and discoveries, and have been highly conducive to their improvement) yet the art of original Poetry, to an excellence in which the wild exuberance and plastic force of Genius are the only requisites, hath suffered, instead of having gained, from the influence of the above-mentioned causes; and will, for the most part, be displayed in its utmost perfection in the early and uncultivated periods of social life.



THE END.